



THE OLD REDINGENSIAN

October 2003

THE PRESIDENT'S LETTER

John Illman CMG

We have had an extremely busy year which has helped to raise the Association's profile, increase our membership, particularly among younger ORs, improve our financial situation and, thus, help us to plan and organise more events with the benefit of a wider membership involvement. But there is still a long way to go to ensure survival, let alone the expansion, of the OR community.

The high point of the year was undoubtedly the inauguration of Big School. This was the culmination of an enormous triumph, which has brought congratulations and thanks from the School, Parents, Governors, Foundation and other friends of the School - even boys. Many of you were there to share that triumph, but I would like also to congratulate those of you who could not attend for the enormously generous contribution which you made. The over £32,000 which we raised far exceeded our target and expectations but we are still short of the final cost of the project. If you have not yet contributed, but would like to, please still feel free to do so. I am determined that we shall close the account within my Presidency year. The Parents' Association has already made a generous contribution to help close the gap and we hope that other friends-of-the-school organisations quoted above will be equally magnanimous. If we are obliged to draw down on our reserves, it would mean that generous OR donors were effectively being asked to contribute twice, which would clearly be unfair.

We arranged for the inaugural ceremony to coincide with the cricket match between the School and the OR XI for the Chris Kays Memorial Cup. We were delighted that Mr. and Mrs. Kays were present to unveil the inaugural plaque in Big School - a further recognition of the enormous contribution Chris made to sport and charities in his regrettably short life.

All the annual OR events continued successfully this year and the Association and I are again most grateful to those who continue to organise them. It will remain a black mark in my book that I failed to show up for the West Sussex reunion as a



John Illman leads the Inauguration Ceremony in Big School.

Left to Right: Dr Philip Mitchell (Chairman of Governors), Mrs Linda Kays, Mr Raymond Kays, Mrs Mary Chaplin (Governor), Mr Tony Waring OR, Mr John Illman CMG OR (President 2003)

result of a foolish (but I hope excusable) mix-up of dates! We all grieved the sad loss of Ted Robson, who had done so much to unite ORs in Australia, amongst the seemingly accelerating list of ORs who have passed on.

We have also started on the initiatives for new events with a wider appeal, which I foreshadowed in my last letter to you. We held the first OR Question Time (à la Robin Day/Richard Dimbleby) in Big School and we are considering a 7-a-side Rugby tournament next September. Your Council has enthusiastically approved opening the Annual Dinner (29th November, please note) to ladies.

We have established Operation Shepherd - a means of communicating thorough year representatives with the members actual and potential - and are trying to modernise and widen our networking. Avoiding the hazards of navel-gazing, we are also carrying out a detailed SWOT review of our mission, aims and objectives, strengths and weaknesses and setting ourselves clear responsibilities and aims to help and increase our membership. We have also established a much closer co-operation with other friends of the school organisations ("fisorgs" I call them) to co-ordinate our efforts, not least in fund-raising. We hope that together we can make an even greater contribution to helping the School and the

boys. We know we cannot create a Rolls Royce but we can at least do our level best to keep the old Morris Oxford ticking over.

Any ideas you may have to support and supplement these efforts will be welcome. We hope to see as many of you as possible at the AGM/Dinner on 29th November and of course at the annual Remembrance Day Service on 9th November.

I confess that, prior to taking over the Presidency, I had no idea how much the ORs continued to achieve. Big School was a one-off, but every year assistance is given thorough the Enterprise Awards, scholarships and prizes to help boys to achieve much which they would not otherwise have the wherewithal to undertake. A small but dedicated group within the Council individually contributes so much to make them happen.

I promise that I will continue to support my yet-to-be-democratically-elected successor who has all the qualifications, which I did not, to lead your Association. It only remains for me to thank you all for your support over the last year - particularly in the culmination of my predecessors' initiatives on Big School - with the time honoured salute - "*Floreat Redingensis*".

The Head Master's Letter

By Andrew Linnell

During the Summer Term 2003, an unexpected letter dropped on my mat. It was from St. James' Palace. It informed me that His Royal Highness The Prince of Wales requested the pleasure of my company at a Reception for Head Teachers to be held at Highgrove on Monday, 21 July 2003. Fortunately this date was the day after the end of the 2002/2003 Academic Year and just before I went on my annual holiday to France. I felt that the invitation was an honour for Reading School and accepted it. I was also able to tell the students about the forthcoming event in my end of year House Chapels.

I was of course curious about why I had been asked. Upon arrival at the Orchard Room at Highgrove, there was no list of which other head teachers had also been similarly honoured. As I have been around some years and had just the previous Friday completed my twenty-fifth year of teaching in state education, there were inevitably some other head teachers whom I knew. I saw some old faces from my years in Kent, for example. What none of us could work out was what we had in common. It seemed that many heads were in charge of schools commended by name in the Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Schools for 2002. Indeed HM Chief Inspector of Schools and a number of HM Senior School Inspectors were present. Other heads also told me that they had received Department for Education and Skills Achievement Awards between 2000 and 2002. In Reading School's case we have had an award every year: 2000, 2001 and 2002. It was certain that the room was filled with the leaders of the nation's highest achieving schools. Interestingly, the head teacher of the nearest school who I knew was Eke Lansdowne-Bridge from Reading Alternative School who a few days earlier had been our guest-of-honour at Junior Prize Giving.

The two disappointments of the day were that it was the only really wet day of the summer and was far too inclement for complete tours of the Highgrove Gardens to be made. Everyone, even those with umbrellas, came back soaked after a very shortened tour of the gardens. What I saw was however most interesting and impressive. After our collective and premature return to the Orchard Room, more Duchy Original drinks were served with canapés and the mingling started in earnest. (The second disappointment was that I did not get the opportunity to ask the Prince of Wales why he chose a school in the Borough of Slough for his sons' education when there is a much better performing and distinguished alternative in nearby Reading!)

It is always impressive to see members of the Royal Family circulate in a room so everyone has an opportunity to meet them in small groups. The ability to respond sympathetically and with attention to all types and conditions of men and women is impressive. At the same time, there is no impression given of any lack of interest. This was the case on this day and the Prince seemed very aware of the challenges facing state education and to be genuinely interested to find out more at first hand.

Just before the end of the reception, The Prince of Wales gave a brief address. This contained some important messages of interest to O.R.'s and was very congruent with our concerns at Reading School. He stated the absolute key role played by public servants, such as teachers, as being significant in determining the future of the nation. He spoke about the need to stretch the language ability of students and to increase their awareness of masterpieces of English literature, particularly Shakespeare, the language of the Cranmer Prayer Book and the King James Bible. He reminded us that schools should try to give students an accurate and well-informed sense of history, particularly our collective British history. The lessons of the past unlock the questions of the present-day and future. He reminded us that little of value is learnt easily and education can quite simply be difficult if it is eventually to be worthwhile and rewarding. His message was not just reactionary and wistfully looking to the past. His philosophy is more complex and interwoven than that. He reminded us of our duty to make students realise they are citizens of the interconnected world, with duties to protect and cherish its complexity and diversity. This environmental theme is a key one for the Prince and is reflected in the way in which he manages and develops Highgrove. He lastly spoke of the need to act in way that is inclusive, so that there is not a disenchanting, unskilled and alienated rump of students, with few or no qualifications. The Prince spoke with great conviction and persuasiveness about his aims through the Prince's Trust, in particular, to offer education and training to those who have not been properly served by the system. Like all speeches that are wide in scope and challenging in content, I did not agree with it all. Much rang true to my experience and hopes for the future in education. No one could say, after being present, that the Heir to the Throne lacks ideas or vision.

The interesting fact for me is that I remember in late September what was said because of the content and conviction. At the time, the Prince's delivery had been rather faltering and hesitant, particularly when he tried to leave his prepared script. Perhaps this is a lesson to us all when we have to speak publicly. It is not easy but say what you feel. All else will seem transitory and inconsequential and could even be mistaken for spin! *Floreat Redingensis.*

OUR SCHOOL

IN THE ART ROOM

A memoir of the '50s - By Mike Oakley

When I was fourteen, everyone decided I should "do Art". My Latin was terrible, my sciences, if anything, even worse, and I was therefore unfit for any normal career. I didn't argue with this: at the time, I had two ambitions – to be a professional racing cyclist or to be a painter. School offered little encouragement towards the former, so I was glad of help towards the latter.

When I moved to the Senior School in '46, Art took place in a small building in the Quad, which later became the Quad Library. It had excellent lighting, wholly from above. The Art Room was presided over by Mr Cox, a quiet, gentle person, a dignified figure on a large, pre-War bicycle. I can remember little in the way of actual teaching but a generally benevolent atmosphere prevailed. I felt more relaxed there than in the class rooms, labs, gym, swimming pool or games field – a haven, in fact. We had Art homework which consisted of drawings about four inches by five. Mine were almost invariably copies of photographs from French cycling journals to which I subscribed. Those approved of by Mr. Cox were pinned on a board in the Cloisters.

My transformation into what I suppose Americans would call an Art Major coincided with the retirement of Mr Cox

and the advent of John Liddell. Two things immediately struck us about John: he had a beard – very rare in those days – and he was an enthusiast. (He was lucky to retain the beard: a student from the University who came to do his teaching practice with us was sent home by "Archie" Meads, the Second Master, on his first morning with a blistering instruction in what was proper in Reading School, which did not include face fungus.) The enthusiasm was the product of a lively interest in all aspects of art, a fascination with crafts and a genuine liking for his pupils. I never heard any of my contemporaries say a bad word about John which I certainly couldn't say about many of his colleagues in the Staff Room.

John Liddell's arrival marked a radical shift in the Art Room, with a greater emphasis on crafts and a provision for specialist teaching of which our group were the prototypes – myself, Geoff Peaker, and John Quinn. We were together for several years and, with Rodney Sigee, whose voluntaries on various jazz and pop tunes enlivened many a dignified exit from chapel, formed a close-knit group inside and outside the School. As time went by, we came to be regarded as a somewhat subversive element. There was something not quite nice about us – bohemian, radical, even bolshie. (During

the preparation of one of those panoramic School photographs, two of the science staff actually objected to having the four of us ranged behind them, as if the contagion could spread or viewers of the finished print might assume that our propinquity indicated a sympathy of view. Guilt by association was a live topic in the '50s.) We did what we could to encourage this: we promulgated what we perceived as the avant garde. (I remember suggesting, rather improbably, that the School should mount Stravinsky's "The Soldier's Tale" instead of G & S.) We held outrageous opinions: politically, I was an anarchist.

Under John's supervision, we visited exhibitions in London and became devotees of the Art cinema. At film clubs (one in the Abbey Gateway, one at the NIRD at Shinfield) and in cinemas, we saw all the seminal films as various as "The Battleship Potemkin" and the Marx Brothers' "Animal Crackers". We listened to The Third Programme. For me, especially, John's most lasting influence was my introduction to what became known as Traditional Jazz. Until then, I had been an undirected enthusiast for Modern Jazz: John pointed me at the New Orleans originals. The first record I bought at his suggestion, Johnny Dodds' "Perdido Street Blues". I literally wore out on the wind-up gramophone and had to buy another copy. I learnt it so well



***Professor Denys Hinton OR (1933-1939)
painted this view of the school in 1989.
In aid of the Big School Appeal Professor Hinton
has kindly donated a number of copies
signed by him but not numbered.***

*The sheet size is 60cm x 43cm
and the picture area is 54.5cm x 38cm.
The price is £40 including postage & packing.*

***Contact Chris Widdows, 21 Bulmershe Road,
Reading RG1 5RH.
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or email CWiddows@aol.com***

that I can, more than fifty years later, whistle the whole thing including the banjo solo.

John's enthusiasm for craft took many forms. One was italic writing: a convert was the Rev. Jack Newman, who subsequently had much trouble with his bank who could not accept that a man of his age could completely alter his signature. John also introduced a pottery wheel on which we had much fun. My first finished article was a glazed and decorated milk-jug: unfortunately, none of us noticed until it was fired that I hadn't put the spout opposite the handle.

But the summit of John's craft activities was the Puppet Theatre. This consisted of a knock-down theatre, complete with curtains, scenery, lighting and so on, and a collection of string puppets – all of it made by John and the group. (Actually, I proved so inept with tools that I made little contribution.) We took the theatre all over the place: my most vivid memory was of a performance in Basingstoke for which we had to be equipped with a transformer: at that time, I think '52, the whole of Basingstoke was supplied with DC current. We did a circus routine. My main task was to

change the 78 rpm records, which included The March of the Gladiators and Jelly Roll Morton's version of "High Society", the traditional clarinet solo from which I also formed part of my whistling repertoire.

John and his wife had a cottage at Ipsden, out beyond Woodcote, and we spent many a happy weekend there, learning to scythe the grass and, in John Quinn's case, painting and decorating.

My next step was to have been a place on the Fine Arts degree course at Reading University. (At that time, only two institutions offered such degrees – Reading and Durham. In the late '80s I remember reflecting that the art school I was responsible for was producing more Fine Arts graduates on its own than the whole of England and Wales had in the '50s.) But it was a step I never took as no one – not I, nor the School nor the University- had bothered to check that I had taken the right "A" levels: I hadn't. So, back to Latin – even more of a foreign language than it had been four years before- and my chance of a career in art vanishing over the horizon.

At this point, John Liddell left to take

over the teacher-training course at Bournemouth and his place was taken by Harry Weinberger, who had come to England as a refugee before the War and was already a well-known painter.

I owe an enormous debt to Harry. He introduced me to what I suppose I should describe as cosmopolitan culture: Schubert, Thomas Mann, the Blue Rider, Rimbaud, Mahler...an endless list of new interests and influences. (And this was at a time when I was criticised by a master for reading "Crime & Punishment" in translation "when there are a lot of English books you haven't read"). But, above all, Harry took me under his wing and transformed me from a dilettante into someone who took painting seriously, from a miserably unhappy school boy into an outward-looking young man. I spent the summer of '54, waiting to go up to Cambridge, in Harry's studio, working alongside him, arguing incessantly, totally enthralled. It was an extraordinary privilege. Lessons I learnt that summer have stayed with me ever since, not only in relation to art, but to the whole of culture and, by extension, life.

SCENES FROM THE KEETON ERA

Professor D.J. Hinton (33-39), the artist who kindly donated prints of his evocative painting of Reading School advertised in this issue and the last, published some of his cartoons of life in the Keeton era in the School Magazine of the 1930s. Some of them are reprinted here.



ENTERPRISE AWARDS

This gem of the travel writer's art is by an OR who left School in 2002 to teach and travel for a year in China before going to Bristol University. It would look well in a good travel anthology and we hope that Andrew's writing is given wider circulation in the future. Andrew Young's year in China was partly supported by an OR Enterprise Award and he wrote the following article as a thank you to the Association.

"GANBEI!"

Or 'Tactical Toasting' in the People's Republic of China

By Andrew Young

I arrived in Jinhua with another British student to teach English at the beginning of September last year. To celebrate our arrival, we were invited by the head of the district education committee to a banquet with Communist party officials and the senior teachers from our school. Hardly speaking a word of Chinese and only having been in the country for a week, we were concerned that strict rules of etiquette would result in us making some terrible faux pas. We were on our best behaviour and therefore more than a little surprised as the respected company around us descended into a merry, drunken, rabble.

It isn't an exaggeration to say that eating is one of the pillars of Chinese society. Often, the first question you will be asked upon meeting someone on the street is: "Have you eaten?" Indeed there are strict rules of etiquette during a banquet in China. The chair facing the entrance to the room is for the most important member of your party. The next most respected people sit in the two adjacent seats and so on round the table. Modesty prevents people from taking up these positions, so the start of a meal often resembles a game of musical chairs as everyone politely insists they aren't worthy. When order is regained, you start on the first of a seemingly never-ending procession of dishes and a definitely never-ending procession of toasts.

Toasting people in China works in a similar way as it does in the UK. It's just that the Chinese have got the whole process down to a fine art. To show your respect for someone, you toast them: by raising your glass, cheerfully calling their name and 'ganbei' – literally 'dry glass'. You then down your glass as they do the same. You can use a variety of drinks for this process. All of them spell trouble. A lager has the benefit of being relatively weak but the bubbles quickly make you feel uncomfortably bloated. There's no such problem if your tipples are one of the various traditional Chinese rice wines, which are actually spirits. The only problem here is that whichever one you plump for, your throat will feel like it's on fire every sip you take and you rapidly won't be able to see the glass to sip it anyway.

You need to show your respect to everyone round the table and they will all show their respect for you. So, if you know you'll be dining with 10 people, go to the meal expecting to drink about 10 pints or 20 shots as a minimum. After this, the fun begins. Although Chinese society is not particularly superficial, people are very careful to present an image to others and would hate to 'lose face' if they behaved tactlessly while drunk. However, people love trying to get others drunk and this becomes just as important as the actual meal. Without a word being said, various drinking alliances form, victims are singled out and before you realise it the whole table is trying to get you drunk.

People develop elaborate strategies to prevent themselves losing face. If you're in danger of slipping into a stupor, then the only hope left is that your opponents will do so first. Every drop that isn't in their glass is a wasted opportunity. In practice this means that toasts are fiercely haggled over, a process which is made more difficult because as soon as you forget to keep an eye on your glass, someone tips a bit more in. So, with one hand over your own glass and the other gesturing frantically at the other person's, you try to convince the rest of the table that they deserve to drink more. All this might buy you a little more time, or help to make others drunk, but in the end you always end up drinking and your glass is nearly always completely full. This isn't a problem for most socialites however; they just spill it. Picking your glass up clumsily is one of the oldest tricks in the book. There was a headmaster famous in our local area for picking up his glass and then throwing his drink over his shoulder, contentedly sitting back with beer dripping down the wall behind him. He could get away with this because he was one of the most important people at the banquet – although even he only risked it once a night at most. A junior teacher at our school wasn't so fortunate. Every time she was toasted, to the amazement of the table, she would proudly announce that she would drink the toast with rice wine. After knocking it back and showing the empty glass, she would wait until attention had turned away from her then daintily dab the corners of her mouth with a napkin while spitting it back out. The trick was working fairly well, until one meal when she was toasted so many times that she built up quite a pile of sodden napkins on the floor, was found out, and given penalty drinks.

While senior members of the party will find it easier to decline a toast and ensure others accept, there is still a large element of skill which determines who will end up underneath the table. A classic ploy is to phrase your toast in such a way that the other person feels bound to drink. Many were the times I was left with no argumentative room for manoeuvre when a teacher asked me: "Andy, do you think I am a good teacher? If you think so, we will drink to it together!"

One of the few defences to a concerted drinking attack is by being part of a team yourself. Two other foreign student teachers and I were having a quiet dinner in a friend's local restaurant when we were invited to abandon our meal and join a table with some strangers. It quickly became apparent that, apart from friendliness, their main motivation was to get us drunk. There were three of them. The battle lines were drawn. We quickly decided that our best plan of attack was to largely ignore two of the men and concentrate on toasting the third, who looked 'weaker', until he had to retire. The war lasted nearly two hours, in which time both sides had tried to recruit the owner of the

restaurant – known to be a tough drinker – and had cried foul play innumerable times. A truce was only brokered when the poor third man's wife arrived and immediately decided that it had gone far enough. Honour was maintained.

As I have mentioned, the Chinese respect for elders and authority means that headmasters, or matriarchs for example, have less of a problem. I only knew of one exception to this: a Mr He, who was the headmaster of a local school. He had a hereditary problem – that his surname 'He' sounds exactly the same as the word for 'drink'. Combined with a vague reputation as being 'funny when he's drunk', this ensured that never on the various times when I saw him did he get away without being got very, very drunk.

With all this attention given to drinking, you could be forgiven for thinking that the actual food gets forgotten. However, eating out is quite an experience in China and not just because of the occasionally bizarre dishes. For British tastes some of the ingredients in – and even the order of – the dishes comes as a shock. During a Chinese banquet, dishes are brought for the entire table to pick at fairly regularly throughout the meal. Even more familiar tastes may be a new experience in China due to when they appear in the meal. Sweet dishes come with sour so, just after having had a slice of a pineapple 'pancake' with sugar and sprinkled hundreds-and-thousands, you'll be offered the prawns. What seem like the foundations of any meal, such as rice or noodles, often come last. This is because these traditionally were, and to a lesser degree still are, relatively cheap and available – and so it shows generosity on the hosts' part to serve a meal comprising of rarer, more expensive foods. For this reason, a good meal in China should include a high proportion of dishes made of meat – and the more exotic, the better.

Dog is famously included but this is in fact one of the safer dishes you could end up being served. Not many parts of the animal are thrown away, so if you fancy chicken soup expect to find floating feet and even a head – which you're expected to eat the skin off. Furthermore, as a foreigner and therefore an honoured guest, you'll be served up these most choice selections as a special favour – although it is also true that some Chinese know our slightly less adventurous tastes and so go out of their way to dig up strange recipes for their own amusement. After some time eating in China, you get to know all too well the



Andrew Young (far left) with host 'Kenny' (centre) and friends

barely contained look of excitement on your hosts' faces as you munch away on your 'chicken', and they say "you know – that's not exactly chicken..."

Still, I recommend you try everything you get offered, as it's usually fairly good. Fried cow's intestine with green pepper actually came to be one of our favourite dishes. If nothing else, when else are you going to get the chance? You don't often find spicy snake down at your local takeaway.

However, even the most adventurous of you might want to avoid cow embryo in omelette, which I had the pleasure of sampling at a friend's restaurant. With hindsight, it should have sounded a warning that my Chinese hosts took one look at it and said "errgh. Andy – you eat it". Also, looking back, its appearance didn't bode well. About 3-4 inches long, it was only a half developed shape, with stumps for legs and two huge glistening eyes – all a uniform grey-ish colour and still in the embryonic sac. Because it is so small, when you bite into it, you take off about half the body. What I hadn't anticipated was that there was no actual meat at all – the skin is only just holding together a red sludge that comes pouring out the other half you've set back down on your plate. The taste is difficult to describe, but it seems raw. I didn't finish the second half, but the omelette wasn't bad.

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KEETON!

GEORGE KEETON - HEAD MASTER 1914 - 1939

George H. Keeton was an awesome Head Master. As he moved around the school a cave system operated. His progress would be heralded by the urgent warning "Keeton! Keeton!" and a flurry of boys returning to their desks or resuming a dignified demeanour before his eagle eye could single them out. He was educated at St. Edmund's School, Hunstanton and Oakham School. His father was Dr. Haydn Keeton, the organist of Peterborough Cathedral for more than 40 years and who numbered Sir Malcolm Sargent amongst his pupils. George Keeton gained an open Classical Scholarship to Emmanuel College Cambridge in 1897 and obtained a First Class in the Classical Tripos of 1900. In 1899 and 1900 he played for the Cambridge University XV and in 1903 for the England XV. He was a Master at Reading School from 1901 to 1903 and then went to take charge of the Classical VI at Fettes College, Edinburgh, until 1910. This was a post to which he returned during WW II after he had retired from the Headship of Reading School. Characteristically he did this to replace a Master who was serving his country. Between 1910 and 1914 he was the Head Master of Pocklington School, East Yorkshire.

GEORGE HAYDN KEETON HEAD MASTER 1914 - 1939 *By Sidney Vines*

By one of those odd coincidences which happen sometimes in life, (certainly in my own) my years at Reading School comprised the decade of the thirties. I arrived in January 1930 and left in December 1939. When I came (aged 8) Ramsay Macdonald was Prime Minister and there was poverty in Reading unimaginable today. In St Mary's Butts small boys played in winter in bare feet. Knots of men stood all day talking and smoking, for year on end, with nothing to do except go to the Unemployment Exchange once a week and draw their 10/- weekly dole. Things had improved a little by 1938 because the country began to rearm - thus creating jobs. The supreme irony was that the terrible scourge of unemployment was cured by the Second World War.

We, at Reading School, were largely insulated from all this, though one third of the annual intake were scholarship boys from poorer families, while the remaining two thirds paid, I think, £5 a term - not a large sum. I remember at the Tuck Shop you could buy a lunch of peas on toast for 4d (equal to about 1.5p in modern currency). As can be seen, it was not luxurious living but it sufficed.

By December 1939 we were at war and the next year, 1940, boys only a year or two older than us were flying Spitfires in the Battle of Britain. The boys of my vintage soon followed them into the Armed Forces, some to survive and some not. We had been well prepared by the education we received at Reading School

to fight for our country because of the spirit inculcated by the Head, Mr. G. H. Keeton. In 1930 he was about 55, of medium height with silvery grey hair and spectacles. He had a patrician look, a handsome man with his emotions well under control. He was austere. We were in awe of him. When he walked down the corridor there was usually a group of boys round the time table, pushing and shoving, but the instant the Head appeared, silence reigned. He did not need to say anything - his force of personality was enough. His remoteness from the boys could not have applied to the staff, for he obtained complete loyalty from them and that you can only achieve when they like and respect you.

Many of them devoted their whole lives to the School and ran school societies after school hours. Mr. Nightingale (Birdie) ran the Chess Club. Mr. Saunders (Sugar) ran the Debating Society. There was the Thespian side of things, where Birdie, with the help of Mr. Francis (Fanny) and Mr. Timms (Timmy) ran both the annual school play and the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. Timmy was the star, playing the comic roles like Sir Joseph Porter KCB in HMS Pinafore. It never occurred to me that they were giving up their leisure time which they could have spent with their families, to teach us how to grow up as civilised human beings. Mr. Saunders, for example, ran the debating Society on Saturday evenings, where we discussed such motions as whether Hitler was peace loving. Saturday was the one evening in the week when there was no homework and we were of the age when the fascination of the opposite sex was just being discovered. Despite this we went to debates, tried to learn the arts of

public speaking, whilst Mr. Saunders suffered the pain of our callow and ill expressed speeches. I loved it all and often stayed at school until after 7 p.m., when the pangs of hunger forced me home.

The devotion of his staff was quite extraordinary, and for this Keeton must get the credit. When he became Head of Reading School in 1914 Keeton was 39. The next year came the amalgamation of Kendrick School and Reading School. Kendrick had around 215 pupils and Reading approximately 110, with practically no Boarders. By 1939 the School had some 600 boys of whom 120 were Boarders. It obtained funds to build a new swimming pool and gymnasium with changing rooms. It was flourishing.

Keeton was a Victorian. His favourite maxim was "Mens sana in corpore sano". He practised what he preached, for at 55 he was very fit and his mind was razor sharp. He oversaw some fine scholastic achievements, with scholarships to Oxford and Cambridge, but he wanted to inculcate what he called the public school spirit, to make us honourable gentlemen, worthy of taking our place in the destinies of the British Empire. To encourage this he favoured Classics, both Latin and Greek, the Officer Training Corps, all games, but particularly rugby and cricket and the many out of school clubs.

Part of the public school spirit was the skill of leadership, which some are born to and some have to learn. Keeton was at pains to foster this by means of games, the OTC and above all the prefectorial system. Most became prefects in their last year, and it brought some coveted



On 25th June 1926 Reading School was honoured by a visit from HRH the Prince of Wales, later the Duke of Windsor. This historic picture shows him in deep conversation with George Keeton. The Prince had just opened Caversham Bridge and was said to have enjoyed his visit to our school very much. The visit was to mark the successful development of a first class school following the amalgamation of Reading and Kendrick Boys' Schools. Charles Chapman (23-27), whose obituary appears in this issue, was on parade with the OTC on the day.

privileges. You had the use of a study in a corridor just off the entrance to Big School. The word "study" was a euphemism, for what went on there was mostly gossip. You could cut a period if you wanted. You had a prefect's tie and a prefect's cap. You could give minor punishment such as lines but the Captain and Vice Captain of School were allowed to use the cane. No one misused the privilege until the very end of my time, when a Captain said to a boy that he would carve his initials on the boy's backside. The boy told his mother, the story got back to Mr. Kemp (who had just taken over as Head) and the privilege was immediately withdrawn. It seems barbaric today that boys were allowed to cane other boys but the system was never misused in Keeton's time, which says something for his judgement in selecting for Captain and Vice Captain.

Something must be said about discipline. Until the Education Act of 1944, there

was a Junior School where boys went from the ages of 8 until 12. The Head was Mr. C.P. Peach, who was a martinet. He wielded the cane freely for minor misdemeanours, or for what he judged insufficient effort in schoolwork. I had the cane frequently and never resented it because I knew I deserved it. I was a boy who tried to do enough to get by, but no more than I had to. The cane was the only sanction which had any effect on my work and under Mr. Peach I did very well in the exams. Mr. Keeton used the cane but sparingly, so consequently I did less well. Of course we now live in different times in which exams dominate far more than they did. I wonder if it is better?

We were told that we were the boys of the Empire "on which the sun never sets". It did, and with the independence of India in 1947, the ending of the Empire was merely a matter of freeing the various colonies in the best way possible. We had no idea that this was to happen, so it could be said that we were training to run an Empire which soon would cease to exist. It could also be said that it was the purpose of Reading School to produce leaders of industry, business and the professions in Reading. There were plenty of solicitors and bankers but I heard of none in either Huntley and Palmers or Suttons. Amongst the boarders in South House were the Boulting brothers, Roy and John, whose films have become immortal. And H.E. Dollery (the hero of my time) who scored a century for the School against the MCC at the age of 14, and went on to become a professional cricketer with Warwickshire. He played several games for England, but his best years were lost to the war. He had the consolation of captaining Warwickshire in 1951 when they won the championship.

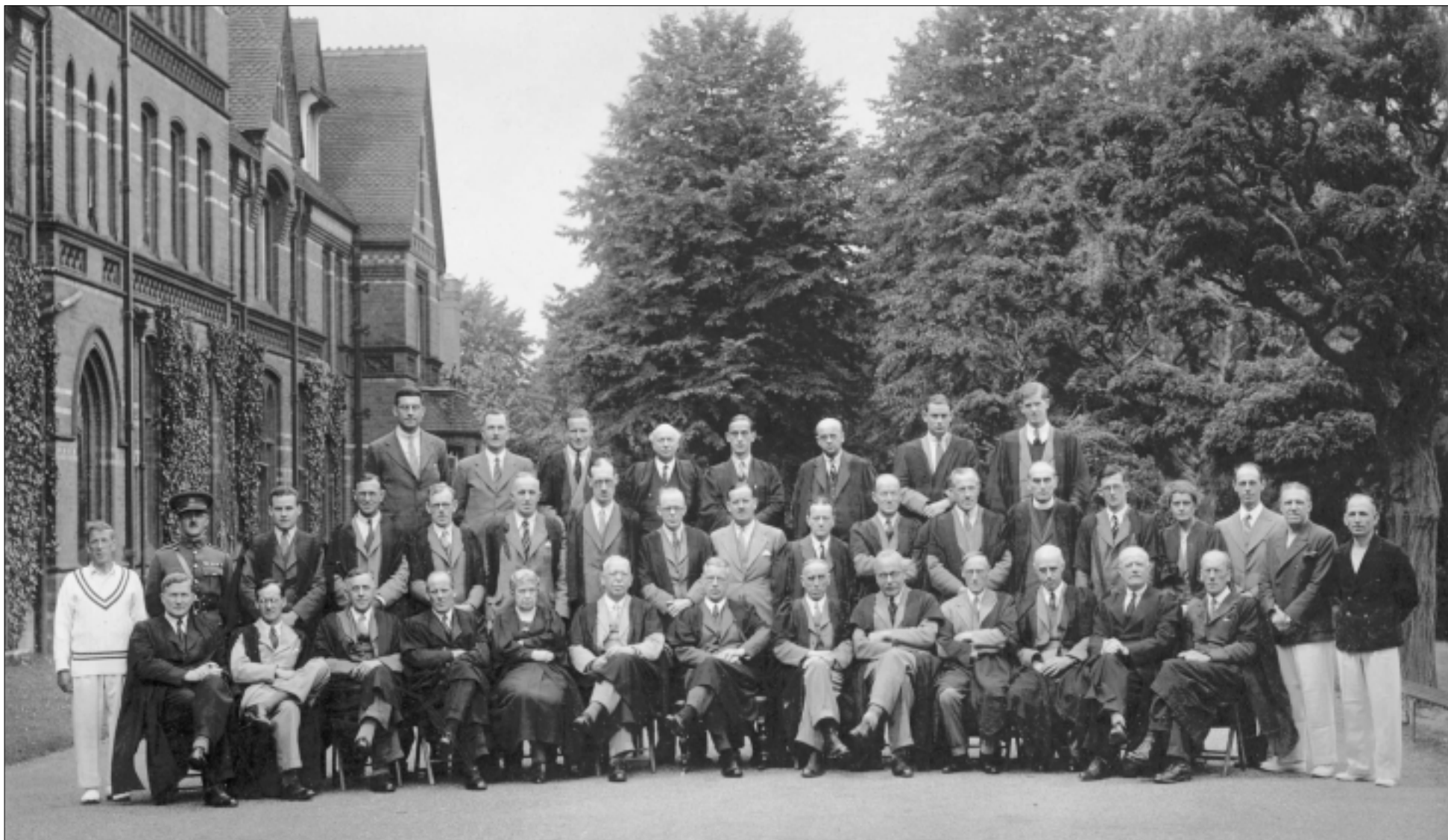
It could be said that we were not being educated for the industrial and technical world of the 20th century. We learned nothing, for example, of the internal combustion engine. Against these criticisms must be set outstanding achievements. We were brought up to be civilised Christian gentlemen who loved their heritage (I was given a love of poetry which has sustained me throughout the years of war and peace. It was admirable and I remain grateful for it.)

GEORGE KEETON AND "THE WAR OF AMALGAMATION" By John Oakes

A total of 418 Old Redingensians served in World War 1, of whom 84 were killed in action or died of wounds received. Martin Parsons and John Oakes wrote in their book *Old School Ties*: "Casualty figures of almost 20% was a high price to pay". It is not surprising, given what we now know about the nature of war, that "those sitting in the audience at Speech Day in 1914 were yet to be aware of what awaited them on leaving school" for they had been engaged in an altogether more pressing matter - the "War of Amalgamation". This conflict had been opened in 1913 when the Corporation of Reading resurrected a scheme for amalgamating Reading School, which was costing them a great deal of money, with Kendrick Boys' School which was popular, overcrowded and in bad repair.

D.G. Williams, the editor of the *Reading School Magazine*, wrote in the April 1914 issue: "Reading School has passed through many crises during the past 800 years, but it has never faced such a deadly one. The prospect is indeed gloomy; that a policy strongly opposed by the wishes of both parents and Old Boys of both Schools should be persisted in, argues simply madness. What the reasons are at the back of it all we can only surmise; what is clear to us is that Reading School will keep true to its old traditions to the last minute of its existence and Masters and boys alike will 'play the game' and work for the existence of the school as if its existence were secure instead of being in most dangerous jeopardy." It may not have been coincidental that J. Bromley Boorne published his school song, *Floreat Redingensis*, in the next issue (July 1914) of the magazine and dedicated it to Dr. Eppstein who vehemently opposed the plan to amalgamate with Kendrick. There was a class war going on, though everyone was loath to admit it.

The *Times Educational Supplement* dated 3rd November 1914 carried an article about the forthcoming amalgamation which was clearly unusual enough to excite national interest. The issue coincided roughly with the



GEORGE KEETON AND STAFF JULY 1939

Back row standing:

L A Ruffell S J Cox L H S Emerson E O Daughtry S G Timms P T Taylor B L R Dowse F Nelson

Middle row standing:

*W G Bott RSM E Rollings ??? W J Streather G Vale F H C Redington C P Peach C A Poole C N C Field (Bursar) H Lonsdale A L Meads A J Kelson Rev E G Levien B C Harvey Miss M M Barkas F A Rolfe
Sgt Maj J Fobester Sgt J Lockwood*

Front row sitting:

D G Francis C A Nightingale E J Woodford J G Fry Miss A S O'Reilly J L Sylo-Jones G H Keeton P C Edwards J W Saunders F B Chapman W E Mowton G J Lamb A J Grigg

resignation of the Head Master, Dr. Eppstein, who saw the scheme as a personal failure, and the appointment of George Haydn Keeton who would undertake the fusion of the two schools and bring a new Reading School into being.

The Times, as ever, summed the matter up succinctly: "The fact remains that, quite apart from the necessity which has dictated the policy, the aspiration of the new school is a noble one. The aspiration is to maintain and develop Reading School as a boys' school of the first grade; to organise it primarily, but not exclusively as a day school; to maintain and increase its power to give a liberal education in preparation for the universities, the professions and business life; and, above all, so to conduct it as to make it readily accessible to boys of all classes". Surely few would argue with that.

The necessity which dictated the policy was largely to do with money. As the Times stated "the growth of the School had not been commensurate with the outlay in capital expenditure and annual maintenance". Like the Scottish Parliament building today, the building costs of the new school opened in September 1871 exceeded the estimates by a long way. The Trustees were forced to borrow money to pay for it and Reading Borough Council provided the collateral. The school was never profitable despite the best efforts of a number of heroic Head Masters. Michael Naxton's 'History of Reading School' gives a detailed and lucid account of the valiant but ultimately unsuccessful attempts to solve the debt problem and make the place pay its way. None of them worked and in 1908 an Order in Council made Reading School a 'Public Secondary School for Boys'. Its administration passed to the Corporation of the Borough of Reading which found it to be a financial burden and spent a number of years creating uncertainty whilst attempting to bring itself to do something about it.

The presence of boarders in Reading School always troubled the good burgesses of the borough since they felt that their rates were going on the education of rich folk from out of town. Without boarders the school could not hope to meet its debts. The 'Public School Spirit', Chapel, OTC, Old Boys' Club, Debating Society, Cricket and



George Keeton as an Assistant Master on Eppstein's staff in 1902. He is in the light jacket seated on the ground

Rugby had always underpinned the philosophy of successive Head Masters and Governors of Reading School. Their aim was to prepare pupils for University, Sandhurst, Woolwich, Cooper's Hill (the Indian Civil Engineering College), the Indian Police or the Navy. All of these things required a special commitment by the staff and were, for some indefinable reason, based on the presence of boarders. Parents do not want to commit their progeny to a school with an uncertain future and so boarders were hard to come by despite the advertisements which appeared in the railway magazines of the period. Sadly, though not surprisingly, since it had been living with uncertainty about its future for years, numbers were falling off at Reading School and the boarding houses were woefully under populated. The 40 year old Kendrick Boys' School on the other hand had been starved of funds and its buildings were inadequate and in poor repair. It was attracting plenty of pupils from amongst the families of aspiring business men, farmers, tradesmen, clerks, butlers, publicans, railway men and prison warders of Reading. These parents did not, in general, contemplate sending their sons to university. This they considered to be above their station. What they wanted was for their sons to join the family firm or to get a 'respectable job'.

The Town Council vacillated for a long time but was forced, in the end, to bow to

necessity. It rejected the idea of erecting new buildings for Kendrick School and decided to send its pupils to its expensive 'Public School' in Erleigh Road. Dr. Eppstein departed to teach, briefly, at Bradfield College and later to be Rector of Lambourne in the Diocese of Chelmsford. Thus George Haydn Keeton commenced his long and distinguished Headship of Reading School. He was unable to get away from his own school immediately so Mr. Newport, the elderly Second Master, assumed the Headship until he could do so. The Editor of the School Magazine could now write in his editorial: "On the outbreak of war abroad and our own participation, the nation showed a united front to the world by laying aside all internal struggles. Some of these feuds will doubtless be resumed at the termination of the war, but it is a great satisfaction to be able to record a peaceful and honourable ending to a feud in which we ourselves were involved, and we believe and hope that it is ended. We refer, of course, to the so-called 'War of Amalgamation'. The school is to be fused with the Kendrick School, and it is a matter of congratulation that those who opposed the scheme of amalgamation should not merely abide by their decision, but offer their services to help the scheme work successfully".

Keeton took up office proper in January 1915. He had a difficult job on his hands so the Town Council postponed the amalgamation until he could establish

himself. His first speech, made when he was officially 'chaired' in Big School as Head Master, proved interesting. He had his 'pre-amalgamation' audience eating out of his hands with remarks such as "never had there been a time when the Empire more required the qualities which were associated most closely with the public school spirit, and which depended on a regard for truth, for honour, and for duty. (Applause). That spirit has gone a long way to form the moral code of this country - it has long been a force working through many generations of public-school boys, which had affected large numbers who had never been near a public school..... I hope and believe that the School will long flourish, and that in it we will see still flourishing the old public-school spirit. (Cheers.)". He established his rule in Reading School. He now needed to meld the two schools together on the first day of term in 1916, a task made all the more difficult because the number of 'Kendricks' - two hundred and eight - well and truly outnumbered the one hundred and eighteen 'Redingensians' - a point not often made. How did he do it?

His method was to expunge all but the minimum reference to Kendrick Boys' School. It is said, though probably apocryphally, that he waited for the Kendrick boys to walk up the drive for the first time and exhorted them to "burn their caps". The registers, now in the archives, show that every Kendrick boy was entered as though he had joined Reading not Kendrick school. He appealed to the large number of boys who had joined from Kendrick School "to transfer to Reading School, of which they were now members, all the enthusiastic devotion and affection that they had given to their former school" and asked both sections of the School "to realise that they were now one corporate whole. There must be no idea of division or separateness, and there must be no conduct based on such an idea". His personality, which, according to Sydney Vines, inspired awe amongst the boys, must have ensured that no one could see the join between the 'Redingensians' and the 'Kendricks'. Seven new Masters were taken onto the staff to deal with the increase in numbers. Only one of them, Mr. A. Keeble, BA Royal University Dublin, was from Kendrick School. The Head Master of Kendrick, The Rev. Mr. Priestley, was appointed Bursar of Reading School. That was it. The rest of the Kendrick staff had to shift for

themselves and the town was much troubled by their plight. Keeton, writes Michael Naxton, was unfairly blamed for this since the Education Authority took the decision.

George Keeton believed in his prefects and he used them as the front line in his plan of amalgamation. From a transcript of his speech made at the time by a prefect, R.F. Wright, we can almost hear the authentic voice of the man, as he addressed them in their Common Room on Friday April 30th 1915: "As it is a most important term I think it fitting that I say a few words to you. Quite probably the Kendrick School will be coming up next term and it is your duty to see that the school is ready for the amalgamation. It will not pull the school down. If I thought that would happen I myself would not continue as Head Master. But I have some suggestions to make. On two occasions last term there had been some trouble with junior boys - for the most part from a rebellious spirit against the prefects. This spirit must be stamped out. I think that perhaps it would be better if a little greater distance were to be kept between prefects and junior boys. I especially desire keenness. I think the present prefects are all keen, but it is necessary to be keen in every thing. By this keenness you will inspire it in others". R.F. Wright, incidentally, became Captain of School himself and was awarded a Thomas White Scholarship to St John's College, Oxford in 1916. He had previously gained an Exhibition for Classics at Worcester College. We may safely assume that his transcript of George Keeton's address will have been accurate!

Perhaps one of the most controversial aspects of George Keeton's head-ship is that prefects were allowed to cane boys for misdemeanours a 'privilege' that his successor, Kemp, was to rescind in the face of some protest early in his tenure. Perhaps we might judge Keeton in the light of his instructions to prefects which open with these words: "All prefects are appointed by the Head Master, and such boys are chosen as will in his judgement exercise a manly influence on the school by their character and their position. The prefects are responsible to the Head Master for the prevention of incipient bullying, ungentlemanly language, and smaller points of School discipline, where the influence of a bigger boy can be felt sooner than the authority of a master. The Head Master is convinced

that the greatest safeguard in a public school against bullying and still greater evils and the greatest incentive to manliness and the formation of Christian character amongst smaller boys, is the influence that can be, and that fortunately has been, exercised by a body of prefects, whose honourable and gentlemanly behaviour, as well as their position in school, have raised them to this office."

Such a statement could not now be made without serious criticism. I leave you to your own analysis of it whilst offering only that Keeton was a man of his times. He was a powerful personality and his school ran with machinelike efficiency. Such people are bound to attract criticism but in retrospect he was an upright, honest and straightforward citizen who did not pretend to grand and theatrical gestures. His most often stated advice was that "if a man spends the first hour of his day at his prayers, his bath and his breakfast he will be alright". Not a stirring piece of advice but it would serve us well enough today.

Only two records of Kendrick Boys' School remained. One is the 'Register of Applicants to Kendrick Boys' School', a document which listed all the applicants together with their parents name and profession, a document which is a gold mine for those interested in the history of Reading Town. The second is something of a more permanent nature. In 1916 it was decided to "remove from Kendrick School to Reading School Chapel the marble tablet bearing the names of Old Boys who fell in the South African War, and add to it those who fell in the present War. Mr. Harry Hutt, the designer of the tablet, which cost £70, will superintend its removal, the cost of which will be borne by the Education Committee (at the request of the Old Kendrick's Association)." To my personal knowledge we have allowed this tablet to go unremarked for at least 30 years, probably more. That is a shame and we must redress the matter at some future date. The present Governors and the Head Master, in a late reference to the contribution the 'Kendricks' made to the present school, named the newest buildings after John Kendrick. The Reading Foundation, on which three ORs serve, has sold the property once occupied by Kendrick Boys' School and the proceeds are on hand to assist the school in future.

NOTES & NEWS

OR NEWS

'Question Time' in Big School, Monday 15th September 2003

at 3 p.m. By kind permission of the Head Master, the Old Redingensians Association invited six distinguished ORs to answer questions on any topic from an audience of mainly 6th formers. The Chairman was the **President of the ORs, John Illman CMG**, former Ambassador to Peru. The panel consisted of **Sir Ivan Callan KCVO CMG (54-61)**, former Ambassador to the Sultanate of Oman, **Peter Fiddick (51-57)**, author, journalist, broadcaster and media commentator, **Christopher Palmer (50-58)**, businessman and entertainer, **Maurice Phillips (51-58)**, former Social Services Advisor and now owner and manager of the Safari Garden Hotel in The Gambia and **Cedric Scroggs (53-59)**, Sir Thomas White Scholar, sometime Visiting Fellow of Nuffield College Oxford, former Chief Executive of Fisons and now Chairman of the South East Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust. In his letter to John Illman after the event Andrew Linnell says: "The response to this initiative has been wholly positive and students appear to feel they would wish a similar event to be repeated in the future. The Senior Master and I think we should start at 2 p.m. if we do it again". It is clear that we should do it again and the challenge to the OR Council will be to persuade panellists from both older and younger members to participate.



The panel: Maurice Phillips, Christopher Palmer, John Illman, Cedric Scroggs, Peter Fiddick, Sir Ivan Callan

The Kirkwood Bursary as instituted in June 1999 to record the outstanding work of the then retiring Honorary Secretary, Kerr Kirkwood, during his long and distinguished tenure of that office between 1990 and 1998. The winner receives a bursary valued at £250 to defray the cost of University fees. The selection panel is jointly chaired by the Head Master and the incumbent OR President. The panel sets out to select the 6th Form pupil who has been most active in charitable and community services but it also takes personality and enthusiasm into account. Raghuv Basin, this year's winner, who was also awarded a £25 book token, had during his year 12 mentored a year 7 and a year 9 boy. The

Mentoring Scheme, introduced by the Head Master, has been very effective in raising standards and adding value as the current phrase has it. Raghuv, who intends to take up a place at Keble College, Oxford next year, was also recognised for organising junior Community Sports Leaders.

Past President Rodney Huggins (44-52) is a board director of a government finance sponsored charity called British Executive Service Overseas. It is a development agency providing professional expertise to organisations in less developed countries and economies in transition worldwide.

In August this year, as an arbitration expert and tax tribunal judge, he was sent on a legal assignment to the city of Cheboksary in the Republic of Chechnya. It is situated 650 kms east of Moscow on the Volga River. His task was to advise the local centre for anti crisis development and judges in the commercial courts about procedures in England and Europe involving companies who are either in receivership or liquidation. In addition, Russia is only just creating self regulating professional bodies such as Law Societies, Institutes of Chartered Accountants and Insolvency Practitioners. Rodney also gave advice on setting up these professional associations locally.

He was privileged to meet the Minister of Justice, President Putin's personal representative and the Chief Justice of the Republic. There is no doubt that Russia experienced a steep economic decline after the break-up of the Soviet Union. But a reform programme is producing results especially in the court systems and professional bodies. The result is sustained demand for knowledge of western financial, legal and trading practices. Rodney endeavoured to provide this in a limited but vital field. He was sponsored by the Moscow Narodny Bank.

(Will Lunn adds that Rodney has kindly donated his late father Rowland Huggins' 1st XV honours cap to the safe keeping of the ORs, with the request that it be placed in the Canning Cabinet in the Library. The Cap was awarded for the 27-28 season).

The Farmery Medals were won this year by J. Chevassut of County House and M. Richards of School House.

The Rev'd. Canon Colin Hill OBE (39-46), formerly Vicar of Croydon and Chaplain to the Queen, has been researching for some three years a C16th Archbishop of Canterbury, John Whitgift 1583-1604, who founded his Free School and Hospital of the Most Holy Trinity at Croydon in 1596. The thesis, which was submitted to the University of Wales, Bangor, was awarded an M.Phil.

Mike Oakley (44-54) writes in response to Patrick Cartwright's remarks about Masters' nicknames: "I always understood that Bonk's nickname came from his habit of striking one behind the ear with his knuckle. It was very painful, I can still feel it! That constant 'knock knock' on the skull was usually accompanied by his endless mantra: 'You'll be wading through those Russian rivers...' I never knew why he had that particular obsession. Was he perhaps a member of the ill-fated expedition to Archangel at

the end of World War 1? When he taught me, the Cold War was in full swing, so Russians rivers were much in everyone's mind".

Mike adds: "In Frank Terry's article (The Opera. The Old Redingensian May 2003) he writes about the great G&S controversy of 53-54. John Liddell, who was Art Master at the time felt that he had to support the Music Master but, with typical generosity, didn't want to deprive the production of the art and design resources of the School - so he detailed me to put his surreptitious designs into effect. I was greatly assisted by Geoffrey Peaker (46-53) who had already started on a course at Reading University (and was later to become Regional Staff Inspector for Art and Design). We spent many a happy hour in Big School, splashing paint about. Although I have a good visual

memory, I can't recall those sets at all, unlike those for Birdie's production of St. Joan, which I remember clearly".

Editors Note. Mike Oakley's article "In the Art Room" appears in this issue.

Garth Scotford, OBE, QFSM (54-59) is emigrating to Perth in October 2003. He was the last Chief Executive of the Royal County of Berkshire and was Guest of Honour at the Junior Prize Giving in June 2002. Garth's wife was for two and a half years Headteacher of Thamesbridge College, Reading and in the early 90s was a Deputy Headteacher at the Thomas Aveling School, Rochester when our Head Master, Andrew Linnell, was Deputy Headteacher of the neighbouring Sir Joseph Williamson's Mathematical School.

SCHOOL NEWS

Reading School Presentation Evening, Friday 12 September 2003. Our President, John Illman CMG, was on the platform with the Chairman of Governors, Dr. Phillip Mitchell, the Head Master, Andrew Linnell and his staff, John Redwood MP and the Right Worshipful Mayor of Reading to present the OR prizes. These were: -

Tom Bishop Award
Elphick Memorial Music Prize
K. Kirkwood Bursary
K. Kirkwood Prize
Capt. W.J. Streather Memorial Prize
Boarders Scholarships

Jeremy Ramsey Art Bursaries

S.G. Timms Testimonial Prizes

Year 8 - Alexandros Bozoglou Livanis
Year 9 - Benjamin Pennington

Past Presidents, Frank Terry, Tony Waring and Rodney Huggins, were seated amongst the honoured guests in the audience as was Jeremy Ramsay and Kerr Kirkwood, both present to see their



Reading School Presentation Evening - Friday, 12 September 2003 in the Great Hall at the University of Reading. John Illman presents the Kerr Kirkwood Bursary to Raghuv Bhasin applauded by Councillor Jeanette Skeats, The Right Worshipful the Mayor of Reading

Bursaries and Prizes distributed. The generosity of the OR Association in providing 22 Enterprise Awards was acknowledged in the programme and in the Head Master's Annual Report delivered from the platform. The Head Master also thanked the many OR donors who had contributed to the renovation of Big School in his report.

The retirement of Roy Perkins and Brian Turnbull from the staff of Reading School would have been marked in the old School Magazine by a proper appreciation of the extraordinary contribution they made. Roy Perkins inspired and led the best mathematics department in the country. In addition to that he was a School Governor and for many years a 6th Form Tutor. He ran hockey for years, also Rugby and cricket teams and he organised and led some notable overseas cricket tours, the last to the West Indies. Brian was an outstanding House Master, first of East House and then School House. The latter, a new house with an historic name, was founded by Brian. He was also what was known amongst his colleagues as Master i/c Gigs, that is he ran the ceremonies such as the Commemoration Service. He was largely responsible for the smooth change over from the old Speech Day to the new Presentation Evening. So well did he handle this that Presentation Evening now seems like a tradition. His efforts on the games field, like those of his good friend Roy, were superb. You would know where to find them both on a summer afternoon after school. They would be taking nets or on the veranda of the Keeton Pavilion with their team. They both spent many Saturday afternoons in their referee's kit on Rugby and hockey fields or their umpire's coat on cricket fields - home and away. They attended, with fresh enthusiasm every time, innumerable elocution and music competitions, school plays and concerts and OR dinners. Recently an OR wrote to ask if the present staff is as dedicated to the School as it was in, say, Keeton's day. It is, but Brian and Roy might argue that it is all a normal part of teaching at Reading School

GCSE League Tables 2003. Many ORs will have been pleased to see that Reading School topped the Daily Telegraph table. School was also top in the Guardian and Independent. Andrew Linnell cautions us all from complacency but he and his staff are due a great deal of praise for this achievement, as are, of course, the candidates themselves.

A Level League Tables 2003. Our School was 17th in the Daily Mail League Table of the top 600 State schools. Of the top twenty only 5 were single sex boys schools and one a mixed school, the rest being girls schools. Kendrick was 4th and the trend towards girls gaining higher marks in public examinations is continuing. Andrew Linnell and his staff, by respecting their pupil's, have shown that there is an answer to this puzzling problem.

SPORT

THE OLD REDINGENSIAANS GOLFING SOCIETY REPORT ON THE JUNE 2003 MEETING

This was held at Reading Golf Club on June 3 on a pleasant sunny day. As there were two trophies to play for, the President's Jug and the Secretary's Prize, it was decided to make the former a 36 holes Stableford competition and the latter the best of 18 hole round.

At the lunch break, after the firsts 18 holes, Gareth Price came in with the excellent score of 40 points. Whether he over-celebrated I do not know, but he was unable to repeat the performance in the afternoon!

We were pleased to welcome John Smith (1949-54) who joined us for the first time and hope to see him on future occasions.

THE DAY'S RESULTS WERE:

President's Jug

Winner with 72 points	Rudolph Bissolotti
Runner-up with 65 points	Jack Holt
Third with 58 points	John Childs

Secretary's Prize

Winner with 40 points	Gareth Price
Runner-up with 37 points	Rodney Lunn

Nearest the pin	John Downes
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We were delighted that the immediate Past President, Dr. Dudley Bruton, was with us in the evening to present the prizes. As usual the Club's catering department looked after us very well and the Course was in very good playing condition.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank Goss Group plc for their generous support in the form of prizes and the O.R. Association for its much appreciated financial support and not forgetting the talents of Will Lunn for his photography on and off the course.

The next meeting will be held at Reading Golf Club on Tuesday, October 7.

**Rudolph Bissolotti,
Hon. Sec.
O.R.G.S.**

**E-mail rudolph@bissolotti.u-net.com
Telephone 020 7843 9132**

MIXED FORTUNES IN OR CRICKET WEEK

Last year I sadly reported the deterioration of the School cricket square, which had for many years been one of the best in the south of England. In this year's O.R. cricket week, the pitches were closer to their former glory, but they were still subject to uneven – generally low – bounce. The major work on re-laying was due to commence in early August, and we hope for a return to its former excellence next year.

These problems have not proved to be detrimental to the School 1st XI, which has had a splendid season, losing only one game, and scores were generally good for the O.R. games. Outstanding performer of the week was indisputably Caversham & Redingensians C.C. captain, James Smart, who scored two 60s and was the leading wicket-taker.

The game against the Drones – comprised largely of Pangbourne College Old Boys – had been disappointingly low-scoring in previous years. This year, the O.R.s batted first and compiled 246 for 8 declared, with major contributions from Dewey, Smart and Bonneywell. When the opponents slumped to 71 for 6, an easy O.R. win appeared likely, but a stubborn seventh wicket stand of 116 made a win for the visitors a real prospect, until school-master John Bonneywell mopped up the tail for a 16-run victory.



Terry Cartwright in action

From the sociable viewpoint, Tuesday's game was the highlight. This saw a one-off game to celebrate 50 years of ORs John Evans and Terry Cartwright playing cricket together. Electing to bat first TC's XI made slow progress, taking 57 overs to reach 232 for 8 declared, during which Smart bowled 26 consecutive overs of accurate off spin. In reply, the Evans' XI seemed to be in desperate trouble at 39 for 4 just after tea. A stand of 173 between cricket week stalwarts Dick Owen and John Grimsdale changed the whole complexion of the game and only one more wicket was lost in five wicket victory with four overs remaining. Many former players were there for the closing overs and there was much reminiscing in the County Arms afterwards.

The Wednesday fixture against the Old Blues has proved to be a tough match ever since they took away the O.R.'s long-standing undefeated record four years ago. Hoping to avenge last year's sound beating, the old boys fielded their strongest team of the week, but could still only muster 190, which proved to be wholly inadequate as the Blues' opener Phillips scored 104 not out in an eight-wicket win.

Thursday and Friday saw our now traditional two-day game against Bowden, the Cheshire-based team captained by O.R., Sean Walters. Interestingly poised overnight, with the O.R.s 213 for 8 in reply to Bowden's 271, no play was possible on the Friday because of heavy rain. Bowden owed their huge total to their Australian opening batsman Smith, who scored 124 before lunch on the first morning. The only Redingensians bowler to escape heavy punishment was Smart who took 5 for 69 in 20 overs.

RESULTS:

O.R.s beat The Drones by 16 runs
O.R.s 246 for 8 dec – R. Dewey 88, J. Smart 66, J. Bonneywell 46;
Drones 230 all out – Sumner 82, Bedford 45; J. Bonneywell 5 for 29, J. Braid 3 for 53

John Evans' XI beat Terry Cartwright's XI by 5 wickets
Terry Cartwright's XI 232 for 8 dec – M. Pryce 65, P. Knight 42, C. Purdie 35 n.o., C. Wilson 34; J. Smart 4 for 75
John Evans' XI 234 for 5 – R. G. Owen 89 n.o., J. Grimsdale 72

Old Blues beat O.R.s by 8 wickets
O.R.s 190 all out – J. Smart 68, T. Cartwright 37, M. Lyford 27
Old Blues 194 for 2 – M. Phillips 104 n.o.

O.R.s v Bowden (2-day game) – match abandoned as a draw
Bowden 271 for 9 dec – R. Smith 124; J. Smart 5 for 69
O.R.s 213 for 8 – J. Braid 53, J. Smart 44, J. Evans 27; S. Walters 2 for 53

We are again indebted to the headmaster for allowing the use of the school facilities and to the O.R. Association for their grant, which ensures that we have the funds to continue the week. As last year, Mark Lyford did sterling work in recruiting players – particularly younger O.R.s..

The week will be held from 19th to 23rd July next year. If you are interested in playing, please contact Mark Lyford on 07901 668374, email markly71@yahoo.co.uk or Terry Cartwright on 01252 795578, email terryc@whiteoaks.co.uk. We are also seeking a couple of new opponents, so if you have any suggestions, let one of us have the details.

Terry Cartwright
August 2003

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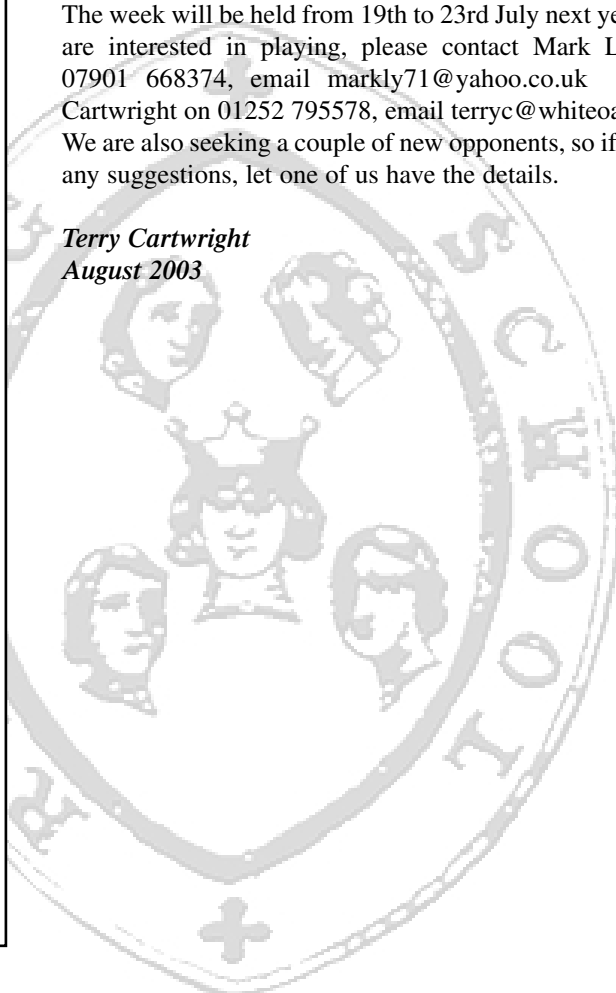
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THE CHRIS KAYS MEMORIAL GAMES 2003

By Mark Lyford

There are some people with whom it is sheer pleasure to spend time. The huge number of people who have recently come along to spend time with the memory and spirit of Chris Kays shows that he was one of them. Nine months ago Chris was tragically killed in the Bali atrocity - an event which shocked us all immediately. The news that one of Reading School's finest ambassadors was amongst the victims was hard to believe. As the details filtered through it became clear that Chris was doing what he does best on that fatal night in Bali - mingling with the crowd and making countless new friends to add to what must be one of the most impressive address books ever.

After much discussion amongst friends, colleagues and, of course, loving parents, Ray and Lyn, about how best to celebrate and remember our mate Kaysie, it was decided that we would recognise his input into school Rugby and Cricket. In conjunction with Abbey RFC (Chris played many seasons there from junior to 1st team) a memorial day was planned with two games played, one involving Reading School Old Boys and Abbey, the other an invitation match between the Presidents XV and an All Star team. In addition it was decided to create a trophy in his name to be presented each year at the OR cricket match against School. In this way the Chris Kays Cup match will be played every year at Reading School and he will always be remembered.

As a rugby player Kaysie was one of the best Reading School has ever had. He played rugby wherever he went - smiling all the while! He was one of those you could always count on and a veteran of many OR XVs, that is unless he was too far away to get there! It was common, when the rallying email for players for a match went round, for a reply to come from some far flung corner of the globe saying something along the lines " Sorry, can't make it this time guys, am in Thailand, but make sure you win and have fun". Kaysie was never one to just think can't make it- so ignore it. He was always keen to find out what happened, who was there, if we had a laugh and who wore his No. 9!

Ashley Cole had the privilege of getting together the Reading School Old Boys team to play in the Chris Kays Memorial Games - a matter of 40 players actually took part and countless others came along to be involved in a very special day. The match itself was played in a style and spirit which personified Chris - total exhilaration and enjoyment and, of course, a Reading School win! Chris would have been proud. We wish he could have played. In all over 2,500 people came to Abbey RFC that day, a true testament to the esteem and regard this little man with the big heart was held in by all who knew him. As it was also Chris's speciality the day went long into the evening!

Cricket was CK's second sport but one that gave him so much enjoyment and yet another group of people to infect with his personality. Chris had captained the School 1st XI and played many OR Cricket Weeks. With his constant grin,

chatter and loopy off spin he made the afternoons in front of Big School so much fun for everyone else involved. If Chris owned the 9 shirt for his ability with the egg-shaped ball, he also made the No. 11 his own for his bat-wielding skills! I wish every cricket team had a Kaysie!

So we decided to initiate the Chris Kays Cup for the School v OR fixture, and the recent match was one that Chris would have enjoyed and excelled in. It was certainly played in the way he would have liked. In a break with tradition the OR team was stacked with players from his era and we almost won it, the School hanging on for a draw with 9 wickets down. None of the boys playing for the School knew Chris. However they certainly learned what it meant to all the ORs playing and I am sure that in the future they will be playing for that cup with the same spirit, intensity and fun as Kaysie did in his time.

Once again the draw of playing for Chris was a spur for those who knew him - a former 1st XI Captain played his first match in 10 years just to be involved. The crowd also came in good numbers, many from Chris's generation getting together for the afternoon and enjoying many memories. I was fortunate to get the team together and the response was fantastic - all those who played wanted to show for their friend, Kaysie.

I would have loved to be able to put his name down at No. 11. We miss you my friend, but we will never forget.

THE CHRIS KAYS CUP SATURDAY 28TH JUNE 2003 SCHOOL v OR XI

OR XI 216 all out
School 159 - 9



Some members of the OR XI

T. Cartwright (55-62), M. Leary (93-2000), J. Cole (82-89), J. Dance (84-91), O. Beckett (81-88), N. Lunnnon (82-89), G. Orpwood (82-89), A. Cole (84-91), M. Orford (95-2002), M. Lyford (82-89), R. Palmer (83-90).

OBITUARIES

PETER LINCOLN-GORDON (36-45)

By Gerald Malkin

Peter died in Kenya, age 75 years, on 18th April 2003. He was born in Bengal, India, the middle of three sons, whose father worked for the Indian Civil Service. He left India when he was 8 years old and began his days at Reading School in the Junior School under C.P. Peach. W.H. Keeton was then Head Master of the Senior School, followed by C.E. Kemp.

Peter was a fine sportsman, excelling at cricket as a stylish batsman and medium paced bowler. He was taught by W.G. Bott and B.L.R. Dowse 'to use his feet'. He played for three years in the 1st XI, captain in 1945 and previously under M.A. Salmon and L.A. Sears. He was particularly proud of his 109 'not out' in 1944 against The Archbishop Tennison School. He subsequently played six times for Berkshire.

I met Peter at Parklands Club, Nairobi, playing cricket in 1953. He was then farming, which had become his life. He married Moira, a nurse trained at Great Ormond Street Hospital, in the late 50s. Her parents farmed extensively at Fort Hall, Nyeri.

Peter was very happily married, a family man with two daughters, Linnie and Carol. A proud grandfather with two boys, both, like Peter and Moira, devoted to sport.

Peter and Moira lived at Naivasha since 1994 in a house which they built. They were able to sell part of their land which became a golf course on which they both enjoyed playing.

My wife Jean and I met Peter and Moira twice in the last nine years at Naivasha and Muthaiga Golf Club, Nairobi. We have corresponded regularly since then. We met at Lewes during their last visit to England.

REFLECTIONS ON THE SUMMER OF 1945

by Tony Waring

Whilst at school it is said you never looked down when remembering the names and exploits of fellow pupils. Consequently, as an aspiring cricketer, I would sit on the terrace at school wondering if one day I might emulate the heroes

of the 1st XI who appeared from the Keeton Pavilion immaculately turned out with blazer top pockets with initials of the colours awarded.

One of these heroes was Peter Lincoln-Gordon, a stylish batsman with a debonair and suave manner that made him shine out as a natural leader. As a result of knowing Peter's younger brother David, who was in my form, I was aware that the Lincoln-Gordons had a colonial background and that their father had been taken prisoner by the Japanese on the fall of Singapore.

On returning for the 1945 summer term I found myself playing wicket keeper in the 1st XI which in that year was captained by PLG. Being the baby of that very successful side I was in awe of my heroes, particularly the likes of Eric Martin, Ken Ware, Geoff Draper and, of course, Peter. Despite having a certain aloofness he always led by example, passing words of encouragement over erratic bowling or dropped catches. Such leadership reflected through the team's performances that the 1945 season was deemed a good year for School cricket.

On leaving school, Peter was selected to play for Berkshire County Cricket in company with other notable OR cricketers, D.W. Stokes, R.D. Mackey, L.A. Sears, M.A. Salmon, all of whom had been coached at School by Bill Bott, the former Worcester county professional. When coaching WGB demanded that you play a straight bat at all times. That is how Peter Lincoln-Gordon personified the way in which the game should always be played.

LEN FISHER (27-33)

who died in June 2003

*By his daughter,
Mrs. Julia Overson*

Len was born in 1916, the son of a policeman. On leaving school he joined the Highways Department of Berkshire County Council as a civil engineer. In WW2 he was seconded to the War Department and re-joined Berkshire County Council in 1946. He also worked for Berkshire County Council for a few years prior to his retirement.

He was a staunch supporter of the OR Association and his wife Evelyn was a talented organist, being a member of the Berkshire



Reading School 1st XI 1945

Back row: *W G Bott (coach), A R Waring, E W Davis,
R W Gittins, P J Burgess, G H Taylor, J A Goodworth*
Front row: *G D Draper, M L Duggins, P Lincoln-Gordon (Capt),
K W Ware, E A Martin*

Organist Society. On the death of Evelyn he donated all her organ and choral music to Reading School and financed the construction of a music cabinet now housed in the organ loft in the School Chapel. After Evelyn's memorial service held at Goring Church, Graham Ireland M.Mus., B.Mus., FRCO, LRAM gave a recital in 2001 in her memory, just prior to his retirement as Director of Music at Reading School.

CHARLES R.H. CHAPMAN

(23-27)

By Kerr Kirkwood

Charles was born in 1910 and died in April 2003 at his home in Shiplake-on-Thames. He was one of the most senior Old Boys on our register. He was a choirboy from and hailed from Bristol. His family moved to Reading in 1919. At School he was an all-round sportsman, playing Rugby and cricket and doing well in athletics. He was keen on the OTC and was on parade when the Duke of Windsor visited the School in 1927. He joined the TA as a gunner in 1939 and served in the North African theatre, being mentioned in despatches in 1944. In business he was with Sun Life Assurance. Messrs Widdows and Kirkwood represented the OR Association at his funeral service on 24th April.

E. "TED" A. ROBSON (38-46)

By Kerr Kirkwood

The death of Ted Robson on 7th April 2003 in Melbourne, Victoria severs a long connection with the Victorian OR Branch and our parent body in Reading as it was due to his enthusiasm that the Australian Old Boys entered the fold in 1990 and membership in Australia now totals 40. He passed

away aged 74 after a short illness.

He organised the Annual Victoria Luncheon at Brighton Beach at Christmas. He had a great affection for the Reading School staff who taught him. He also invited ORs in N.S.W. to create their own branch and helped promote an OR bi-annual dinner in Merimbula, N.S.W. in March 2002.

As a National Serviceman he joined the Merchant Navy as a Radio Officer in 1947 and he emigrated to Australia in 1950. In business he was a leader in marketing and advertising for the Australian Grocery trade. He leaves a widow, Alex, and two sons. C.R. Tice (31-38) was present at the celebration of his life in April 2003.

A.W. TICE (23-35)

By Kerr Kirkwood

Alan was born on 11th April 1917 and died in April 2003 in Sydney. He entered West Wing as a boarder in January 1923 and left in July 1935 with Matriculation. He had a good sporting career at School and played for the 1st XV and 1st XI. He was a useful (southpaw) boxer. He saw war service in the RASC in the 8th Army in the Western Desert Campaign and rose to the rank of Captain. Alan was predeceased by his wife of 55 years in 2000. He leaves two daughters and two strapping Rugby and basketball playing grandsons. His two brothers Charles and Don are ORs.

MARIAN JESSIE (PEGGY)

MAULE OR

By Chris Widdows

Family and friends, including the President of the Old Redingensians Association, John Illman CMG,

and her stepson Mike Maule, OR Council Member, gathered at St Peter's Church on Monday 28th July 2003 to celebrate the life of Peggy Maule who died on 15th July 2003. The service was led by Canon Richard Kingsbury and the tribute was given by the Revd. Alveen Thoresen. For almost thirty years Peggy was Advertising Manager for the Caversham Bridge from which she retired in 1997.

Peggy was born in Clapham, South London and her home was wrecked by a land mine in the blitz. At the age of 22 she joined the ATS and by the time she was 24 she was a Company Sergeant Major in charge of 400 girls. After the war she and her sister Betty moved to Reading and made a

career in banking, both living in Albert Road. She met Eric and in 1956 they married and she became the stepmother of Eric's four children. In time ten grandchildren and four great grand children swelled the Maule family ranks. Eric died in 1996.

Peggy's interest in other people and her desire to help them involved her in voluntary work in the Red Cross and on the Council of Management of Hemdean House School. She was also closely involved with Buscot Ward in the Royal Berkshire Hospital, making tiny garments for the premature babies. She and Eric maintained strong links with Reading School and she remained an OR until her death in July.

G.A. NASH ('NAGGER') (38-44) By Clive Rowden

Graham Nash died in July 2003 after falling into a coma in South Africa from which he never recovered. On leaving School he went to the old Miles Aircraft Company in Woodley as an apprentice in the Design Department.

When the war ended he took advantage of his experience in airframes and started a furniture frame business supplying the big manufacturers. He also learned to fly and was always ready to take you up for a "flip". Graham was always concerned with the old, disabled and disadvantaged

sections of society and spent a great deal of time involved in various societies.

He was an amiable man with a good sense of humour and a man whose word was his bond. He will be sadly missed by his many friends and acquaintances.

Clifford Payton, the Secretary of Reading Old Boys Lodge, adds that Graham was initiated into Kendrick Free and Accepted Masons in 1966. Subsequently, on 6th October 1976, he became a joining member of Reading Old Boys Lodge. He was elected Master in October 1980.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 9th NOVEMBER 2003. At 1030 a.m. the Venerable Peter Coombs, Chaplain to the Old Redingensians Association, will lead a Service of Remembrance in the Reading School Chapel. ORs and members of the School are invited to attend. This year the service will be about "Keeping the Peace", a matter which is exercising the government severely at the moment. John Illman CMG, the President, will be giving an address on the theme and hopes that you will attend and support this service.

THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE OLD REDINGENSIANS ASSOCIATION 29th NOVEMBER 2003. This year, by kind permission of the Head Master, the AGM moves back to Big School. A notice is included in this mailing to all ORs.

THE ANNUAL OR DINNER 29th NOVEMBER 2003 will be held this year in Junior School. The Council has enthusiastically approved of the change which will see partners attending this year. We will probably be able to cater for 90 persons in the old dining room. There will be a cash bar open throughout the dinner. Profits from the bar will go towards the Big School Appeal and we would thus encourage you to use it as much as possible. The Head Master has kindly consented to the new grand piano from the Music School being available and we hope that this will lead to some entertainment.

The President elect has chosen to reduce the amount of time taken in the past with formalities, thus allowing diners more time for socialising. The keyword for the night is enjoyment and we are confident that the inclusion of partners will bring a livelier and freer atmosphere to the event. An application form is included in this mailing and we urge you to make your bookings as quickly as possible.

RUGBY 7s

THE INAUGURAL ANNUAL READING SCHOOL RUGBY 7s TOURNAMENT. September 2004

With the enthusiastic approval of the Head Master and John Vaughan, the Director of Sport, this new event will be held at Reading School during September 2004. Details and contacts will soon be available on the OR web site (www.olderedingsians.org.uk) and through Friends Reunited.

OFFICERS FOR 2003

President & Chairman: J. Illman
0118 945 5365 - Email: john@illman007.fsnet.co.uk
Membership Secretary: C. J. Widdows
0118 962 3721 - Email: CWiddows@aol.com
Hon Treasurer: I.R. Moore
0118 935 3505 - Email: ian229@hotmail.com
Social Secretary: B. G. Titchener
01962 774519 - Email: social@olderedingsians.org.uk
Hon Secretary: J. V. Oakes
0118 988 3881 - Email: Oakes538@aol.com

EDITORS

J. V. Oakes
17 Portway, Riseley, Reading, Berks RG7 1SQ
C. J. Widdows
21 Bulmershe Road, Reading, Berks RG1 5RH

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

Mark Lyford
Kerr Kirkwood

O. R. Ties (Silk)
£15

O. R. Ties (Polyester)
£10

From Membership
Secretary:

C. J. Widdows

Cheques to:
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