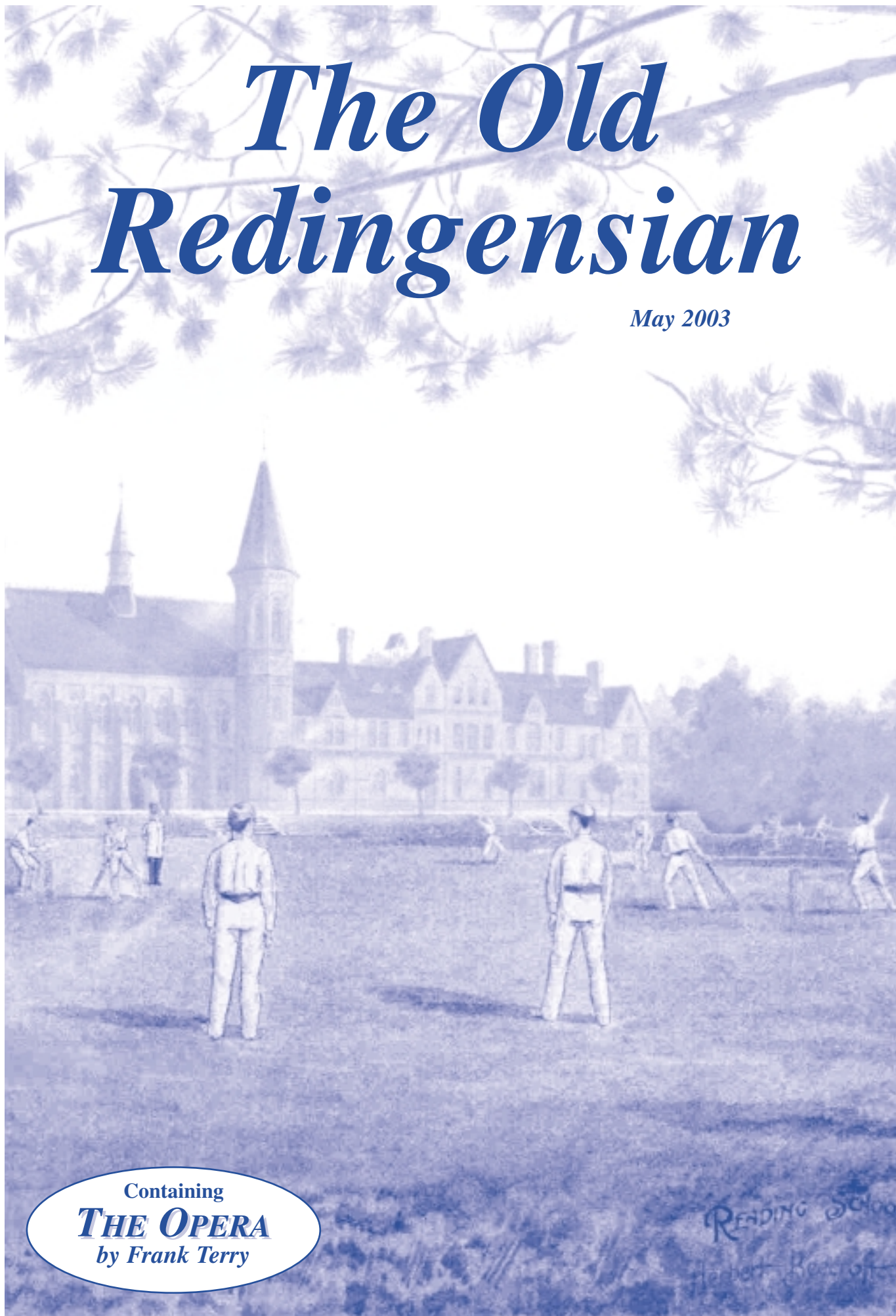


# *The Old Redingensian*

*May 2003*



Containing  
***THE OPERA***  
by Frank Terry

*From a painting of Reading School  
in the collection of Will Lunn O.R.*

# *The President's Letter*

**This is my first letter to you as President, but I did have the opportunity to address you all, in my role as Big School Appeal Director, in an annex to the October 2002 issue of the Old Redingensian. My main purpose then was to seek your continuing support for the Appeal, and we are most grateful to those who responded so generously (more of which later), but I also set out some of the Council's agreed short to mid-term objectives for the Association on which I would like to expand here.**

In a personal letter to a cross-section of you, seeking voluntary increases in your annual subscriptions, I suggested that the Association's primary objectives were to:

- (a) increase and widen the membership of the ORs;**
- (b) provide events and activities which will attract young and old alike;**
- (c) co-ordinate productive co-operation with the other friends of the School organisations; and**
- (d) deploy increased assets generated, human and financial, to achieve our over-riding objective to help the School and, particularly, the boys.**

All the objectives are clearly intertwined and interdependent and I extend the invitation to you to increase your annual subscription payments to £15, £25, or even £50 according to your means. The response to my letter was very gratifying and I hope that those of you who can afford it will use the enclosed membership/gift-aid forms to increase your subs. And don't forget if you do gift-aid your payment the taxman will also contribute an extra 28% which, if the trend set by the cross-section approached already continues, would amount to £1000s. There will, of course, be no ignominy in continuing to pay your annual sub at the current rate - quite the contrary. However, my correspondents suggested that very few could not afford to pay more than £10 (the equivalent of a pint per month in my favourite currency!), and any increased income should be used to promote events and activities which will attract younger as well as older members alike (objective (b) above).

Following Dudley Bruton's example, we have already made progress in doing just that! Membership and events sub-committees have already been set up and have come up with ideas, such as 1-5 year generation representatives, an auction of services, OR wine and rugby-shirt merchandising, Question Times, Sports Balls and (more later) an inaugural event for the renovated Big School. Your suggestions as to what you would like would be most welcome.



*John Illman - President*

Another very informal committee (yes I hate them too and know all the derogatory definitions, but committees are sometimes necessary!) is sharing views between all the "friends of the School" organisations, to co-ordinate and ensure mutual co-operation and participation in all the activities which, jointly or separately, they organise.

I promised (threatened?! ) more on Big School. I came into this admirable project in its latter stages and do not, therefore, have to be modest. Congratulations on the success of the project (you will have seen Foundation Governor Mary Chaplin's letter in the Appeal pamphlet issued with the October 2002 Old Redingensian) have been received from the Chairman of Governors and the Head Master downwards. All of you who have contributed can feel justifiably proud. But, even having received more than we had originally anticipated, we need still more if we are to add the final crowning touch by installing suitable lighting (at a cost of £12,000) and yet avoid drawing down on our hard-earned reserves. So

those of you – a majority – who have not yet contributed, please take advantage of the enclosed forms. It will probably be your last chance because we want to complete all aspects of the project this year. You can also contribute – and enjoy yourselves – by attending the events we are planning and, particularly, the inauguration day we are organising to coincide with the Old Boys cricket match against the School XI on Saturday, June 28th. That day, previously School Speech Day, the two teams will compete for a Chris Kays Memorial Cup, so we hope as many of you as possible will attend and meet up with old friends, as well as inaugurating your new Big School. If you cannot, please pray for good weather!

Sadly you will see from the obituaries in this edition that we tragically lost in their prime two multi-talented ORs, both outstanding sportsmen in all senses of the word. Chris Kays was a victim of the Bali disaster and the School Chapel overflowed with those from many walks of life who mourned his death, but celebrated his life. Only weeks before we had done the same for a very good and old friend of mine, Tom Bucknell, who was another very talented, generous OR, loved and admired by many, who had, shortly before his tragic death, agreed to stand for the Presidency of the OR Association next year. "We shall remember them". In this vein, it is worth pointing out that an initiative of Denis Morarty's, followed up with determination by Dudley Bruton, was to revive interest in the annual Remembrance Day Service in the School Chapel. I hope that this year we can do even better and again increase attendance at the service on 9th November.

In referring to Dudley's highly productive year of tenure, it would be invidious not to mention those who supported him so ably and are now carrying me. I would never have believed, only a year ago, how much a long-serving team of Council Members and office bearers contribute to the ORs. The likes of John Oakes, Brian Titchener, Chris Widdows (who has produced a significant increase in membership) Will Lunn, Ian Moore and others, some of whom have retired, have been the backbone of the Association for

many years and, with successive, transient Presidents, have brought it through good times and bad. They will continue to do so, I trust, for many years to come. But we are also bringing in some new and younger members without whom the Association will not achieve its objectives of building on tradition to modernise, rejuvenate and attract younger members. I hope you will give us your continuing support in achieving these ends.

Finally, if you will allow an old man to philosophise a little, I believe it is appropriate to remember how much we have all (including Chris and Tom) benefitted from the wide range of opportunities which Reading School offers and wish to give a little back. That unique blend of tradition and innovation (which the Association aims to emulate), the challenge to broaden natural strengths and horizons and take on new challenges in new fields (a trend the OR

Enterprise Awards aim to encourage) is a remarkable grounding for life. Without that encouragement to stretch my capacity to take on challenges in fields outside my natural ability, I know that my life, at least, would have been the poorer.

*Floreat Redingensis*  
*John Ilman*

## ***EVENTS***

**PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING DATES IN 2003 FOR YOUR DIARY: -**

**THE BIG SCHOOL INAUGURATION AND OLD BOYS' CRICKET MATCH**  
*(CHRIS KAYS MEMORIAL CUP) AT READING SCHOOL SATURDAY 28TH JUNE*

**REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY SERVICE**  
*IN THE SCHOOL CHAPEL 9TH NOVEMBER (1030 hrs)*

**AGM AND DINNER**  
*(AT READING SCHOOL) SATURDAY 29TH NOVEMBER*

## **THE HEAD MASTER'S LETTER**

**When I meet former students of Reading School, like in other schools in which I have taught, they are interested in a relatively restricted range of issues: to look at the buildings they remember; check whether staff they remember with affection or dread (or something between these extremes of emotion) are still teaching at the school; and finally to collect some statistics about the School. I have written about the first topic recently. I shall leave the very efficient O.R. "grapevine" to deal with the second topic and for stories to flow at OR events or even on the "Friends Reunited" website. I propose now to make some comments on the last strand in this article.**

The uncomfortable truth is that any institution survives one's departure, whoever one is (yes, even the head teacher!). It also changes the moment we leave its hallowed portals for the last day of formal school education. It evolves and develops when we no longer study there. If it did not change, it would fossilize, wither and die. Therefore, when we return to our old schools, we can feel disorientated, even alienated. That which we felt was a critical ingredient of the success of our educational experience may seem to have been cast aside or changed. Conversely the irrelevant and inconsequential, or even worse the things we found unattractive and disagreeable, may have been maintained or even strengthened.

I feel I must say, however, that the uniqueness and greatness of Reading School is an amalgamation of the collective input and efforts of us all who have worked and studied within it, in whatever capacity. Like an educational palimpsest, the current state of the school is a relatively thin veneer that overlays the various characters and events of the school's past. There is an ancient parchment containing a commentary written by Saint Augustine on the Psalms, which, because of the shortage of materials, has been monastically recycled. Thus the current and visible text overlays a partially erased earlier transcript, in this case of Cicero's "De Republica". It is so with Reading School. You may feel the past, and your memory of the school, has been effaced and something else written boldly on top of it. However the past is preserved forever. It is indestructible and just under the surface, impregnated into the parchment and therefore with the merest scratch revealed.

So, what is the school like now? I shall give some statistics to describe it so readers can match the current reality with their memories. I shall use information from recent returns I have made to the Department of Education and Skills as these encapsulate aspects of the school in 2003. There are currently 845 students on roll. Rather curiously, there are 112 boys in Year 7 and this rises to 125 by Year 10. The largest years groups are in Years 12 and 13 as some boys join the Sixth Form from other schools and very few (under half a dozen)

boys leave the school at the end of Year 11. There are 71 boarders and numbers in the two boarding houses are shrinking. The school is an inverted population pyramid and quite different in shape from the populations of other schools. There will be about 65 boarders maximum in September 2003.

A major change in the school relates to its ethnic and linguistic composition. In January 2003, when ethnicity was most recently monitored, 69.9% of the students were classified as white and thus 30.1% as non-white. 27.8% of the students had English as an additional language. The school's multi-cultural character is a great strength and enormously enriches the educational experience enjoyed by all students and staff.

There are 63 teachers and a slightly higher number of non-teaching staff. The members of the teaching staff are very varied by experience, age, background and ethnicity. 37% of the staff is female. Some subject areas are managed by female staff: Biology, Citizenship, Drama & Theatre Arts, English, Personal & Social Education.

Few classes exceed 30 students and many are significantly smaller than this. The school has protected a generous Student:Teacher Ratio of just over 14:1. This level of staffing is felt to be essential if the School is to maintain its standards and preserve its uniqueness. It does, however, mean spending on some other things is not as generous as we would like. This is where the school's wider family becomes critical. The Old Redingensians Association, School Parents' Association, Reading Foundation, current parents and friends of the school input substantial amounts of extra funding annually. This is all very gratefully received. It is spent on items not provided by the public purse: the "nice-to-haves" and essential extras. It is also the way in which the school tries to maintain and develop its unique listed Waterhouse property and support its massive range of extra-curricular activities.

The staff and governors of the school have continued to do wonderful things with the budget. It is not without some effort and ingenuity (but not tricks with smoke and mirrors) that we seem to preserve everything and also pay for initiatives. All boys study drama in Key Stage 3. Latin and Greek are taught. All boys study separate sciences in Years 7 to 11 (biology, chemistry and physics). Boys still have many optional subjects on offer for GCSE in addition to a compulsory core of 10 subjects. Many can study up to 13 and a half GCSE subjects. The list of subjects currently being offered to Year 10 as GCSE's is as follows: art & design, business studies, classical civilisation, drama, economics, geography, German, Greek, history, ICT, Latin, music, physical education, technology (electronics), technology (graphics), technology (resistant materials). The school has also managed to employ an additional member of staff in both literacy, numeracy and special educational needs to support individual students who are experiencing some difficulties on a short term and very focused basis. The school has an excellent pastoral system based on its vertical house structure and has an unmatched mentoring programme through all year groups.

The school is a specialist school for very able boys: nothing more and nothing less. It has protected and developed the best of the past. Much is recognisable from your own time at the school. It has also sensibly implemented new ideas, and in some areas is well ahead of other schools nationally. It achieves and strives for excellence. It is not complacent and wants to improve still further. It is a caring community of individuals with very varied experiences and backgrounds, in which every individual counts equally as part of our community. It is a school that looks outwards and embraces a wider community. This is your school. It is thriving and on the surface possibly very different from that which you remember. It is however the school's soul that is unchanged. It is a remarkable school, the best state school in England and we should all be proud to be associated with it.

*Floreat Redingensis.*  
*Andrew Linnell*



***Professor Denys Hinton OR (1931-1939)***  
***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,***  
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***Telephone 0118 9623721***  
***or email CWiddows@aol.com***



# NOTES & NEWS

From Patrick Szell CBE comes the following news: "On 9 December 2002, the death was announced in the Times of **Major David Charlsworth, MBE RE (Retd)**. He died on 2 December. This must, I assume, be A.D. Charlsworth (1947-54) who passed out of Sandhurst in December 1956 into the RE (School Magazine, January 1957) and who received the MBE for his fine work in constructing a new road in Northern Nigeria (School Magazine, May 1965)".

Patrick Szell also pointed out that the last Old Redingensian failed to mention that **S.P. Moverley Smith** (1971-78) became a QC in March 2002. We offer our belated congratulations to him.

## *The Essex Cricket Tour Reunion:*

This photograph of the guests on the games field at Reading School in July 2002 came too late for publication in the last issue. It is published now with apologies. (*Ed*)

*Left to right standing*  
*Martin Smith, Howard Townson,*  
*Terry Cartwright, Michael Holmes,*  
*Frank Terry, Stephen Wright,*  
*John Short, David Hill, Ken Brown.*

*Kneeling left to right*  
*Barry Bartholomew, Mike Jefferies,*  
*Rodney Mills, Rodney Alexander*



**THE UNIQUE ARCHBISHOP LAUD GOLD SCAFFOLD MEDAL** made by order of John Herne from the gold given by Laud on the scaffold to his father, also John Herne.

**Michael Naxton** (1959-67) who is well known for his History of Reading School, now sadly out of publication, sends news of this curious medal which was sold for something in the region of £20,000 at auction in London in November 2002. It appears that Archbishop Laud, whose picture hangs at the entrance to Big School, gave "eighteen ten shilling pieces and eight five shilling pieces to John Herne, his Counsel, at the time when his head was cut off on an execrable scaffold".

**John Perry** (1942-49) has won the Butterworth Tolly Tax Award for the best contribution to the field of tax. It was presented at the London Hilton on Park Lane on 23 May 2002. It comes as one of the honours John has received as a result of his work for disabled ex-Service pensioners. (See Peter Stevens' piece "Fifty Years On" in this issue).

**Patrick Cartwright** (1943-48) sends the following: "I was fascinated to read Ted Webber's notes on page 3 of the (October 2002) magazine; these were masters that I knew! He doesn't mention Archimedes (Archie Meads or Medes) who I believe was the deputy and appropriately taught Maths and French.

So far as 'Bonk' was concerned, I assumed that his nickname came from his unerring accuracy with a piece of chalk. He could hit the offender from the other side of the classroom, something which would not be tolerated in today's enlightened (!) age. The other possible explanation was from his habit of twirling a knot at the end of his somewhat battered gown.

I also recall a history teacher, a Mrs. Wormald, although the only significant thing I remember is that two members of our class planted a stink bomb behind her desk in one of the classrooms in the old South Block. She made us sit through the lesson with the door and windows closed. We had an RE teacher and parson called

'Old Blue' who was hopeless at discipline and was always marching errant boys off to the Head's study but repenting before he got there and brining them back".

**Sam Masters** (1980-87) writes: "My girl friend and I left New Zealand, where we had been working, at the beginning of 2002 and travelled around Australia for four months before heading onto Tibet and China for three months. We also visited parts of South East Asia including Sumatra, Malaysia, Cambodia and Thailand. The final part of our journey took us to Africa where we travelled from Kenya through Tanzania, Malawi, Zambia and Botswana, finishing in Zimbabwe. We returned to the UK at Christmas and have moved back to London".

## *Lives of Distinction - More Churchmen*

**The Venerable Peter Coombs, the Honorary Chaplain of the Old Redingensians Association, wrote an extensive article about a number of Ordained ORs for the last issue of the Old Redingensian. Two ORs, David Salt and Clive Windebank, escaped the net, pardon the pun, but their stories are offered here not the least because they are far from stereotypical.**

**DAVID SALT (41-50):** David left school to spend three years in the R.A.F. before entering King's College, London with a view to serving in the ministry of the Church of England. Unusually, David was not made a deacon in a cathedral but in his local parish church at Mortimer – by the Bishop of Reading – specifically to serve in the Diocese of Melanesia in the South West Pacific. In the New Hebrides and the Solomon Islands David was instrumental in starting Scout Groups – scouting being his forte at school. After eight years David returned to UK to minister in Camberley, the West Riding and

Checkendon during which time he served as the Rural Dean of Henley. He was projected into national prominence as Vicar of Hungerford because of the shootings there in 1987. There he endured the pain of this event and earned the respect and gratitude of the local community. Two years later he returned to south Oxfordshire as Priest-in-Charge of Harpsden, a joint post which included the Secretaryship of the Melanesian Mission which afforded him with two further trips to the Pacific in 1990 and 1993. David moved to his – still very busy – retirement ministry in Wiltshire at the end of 1994.

**CLIVE WINDEBANK (52-59):**

Clive is one of the surprisingly large number of ORs whose ordained ministry does not follow a traditional path. Indeed he missed inclusion in the October issue of the Old Redingensian because he spent most of the summer as locum Dean of St. Christopher's Cathedral, Bahrain. Clive was trained for a non-stipendiary ministry in the Oxford diocese but, because of the demands of his career in computing in

the oil industry in the Middle East, was made deacon in Nicosia and ordained priest in Kuwait – almost certainly the first Anglican priest to be ordained in an Arabian Gulf state. Chaplaincy in Kuwait was combined with managing the Kuwait Oil Company's computer database for a number of years and subsequently he ran his own IT consultancy. He then returned to the UK, served for an 'interesting spell' at the famed Holy Trinity, Brompton and twelve years ago, with his wife, bought a Care Home for the elderly, the running of which is now an all-embracing occupation, although there is still time for taking services in local churches and for serving an occasional overseas locum – as in Bruges and Ibitha. Reading School influenced Clive's vocation in the sense that attending a good school instilled in him a duty to serve humankind as best he could.

In a PS. dated 24.02.03 Peter Coombs adds: "This week he is flying out to the United Arab Emirates to become chaplain at Abu Dhabi. War or no War!"

## *The Old Redingensians Golfing Society Report on the Autumn 2002 Meeting*

**This was again held at Reading Golf Club on 24th September. Although the Organiser got the day right as regards weather (bright and sunny) he was less successful in getting a good attendance as several of our regulars could not make it, due to prior commitments.**

The morning round was an 18 hole singles Stableford playing for a new trophy presented by the Hon. Sec.. After several meetings where he was runner-up, this time Rodney Lunn was the winner with 36 points; Chris Quartly, who had been cut two strokes for winning at the Spring Meeting, proved a worthy runner-up with 34 points. The 'nearest to the pin' was won by David Allen, who is also a member of Reading G.C.

The afternoon format was a 3 ball team effort (the two better scores on each hole counting for points). The winning team with 45 points was John Steels, Eric Martin and Colin Evans; the runners-up with 43 points were Rodney Lunn, Jack Holt and John Turrill. Whether it was due to a good lunch or other reasons, the 'nearest to the pin' prize was not awarded for the afternoon session as no player hit the green with his drive!

As usual, the Club's catering department looked after us very well.

On behalf of the Society, I would like to thank Goss Group plc for their generous support in the form of prizes and the OR Association for their much appreciated financial support.

Although he could not, due to a prior commitment, participate in the golf, we were delighted that the Association's President, Dudley Bruton, found time to join us for dinner in the evening and to present the prizes.

My thanks to all of you who have supported the Society this year and I look forward to your continued support in the coming year when our spring meeting will be on 3rd June 2003 at Reading Golf Club. I am hoping to hold the Autumn Meeting at a different venue but have yet to make final arrangements.

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

# “Fifty Years On” Reunion Luncheon 6th February 2003

By Peter Stevens

In celebration of our survival of the vicissitudes of fifty years, twenty-three contemporaries of Reading School in the 1940s and 1950s met for a luncheon at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, London SW1 on Thursday, 6th February 2003. The occasion was privately arranged by Denis Moriarty and Peter Stevens (both members of the club), and followed the successful "'02 Centenary" luncheon held last year.

Kipling did not write, "East Wing is East Wing, and West Wing is West Wing, and never the twain shall meet" – but in any case this event proved him wrong, with the inclusion of South House and East and West and County as well.

The main conclusion of those present (some of whom had not met since leaving school 50 years ago) was that we had worn remarkably well. This was attributed to the resilience and adaptability we acquired at Reading School: if we were not necessarily particularly well-informed scholastically, we were well educated. (The Reverend Jack Newman's classes in French Civilisation were recalled with appreciation, as was the bottle of Barsac which found its way into East Wing in consequence, one Speech Day). The contributions of Elaine Naylor and Annie Burr to our education were remembered with admiration and distant longing –

then as now. Another invaluable legacy of our schooldays is tolerance of different views and lifestyles, in conjunction with a lively commitment to our own. Hence the conversation flowed (if not always in Sid Taylor's ever-memorable description of the music of Mozart "from a superabundance of lyrical feeling"), then with a great deal of animation, admirably directed by the "iron hand in the velvet glove" of Denis Moriarty's chairmanship – reining-in the prolix and encouraging the reticent.

In the unavoidable absence of the Reverend David Weekes, Grace (Benedic nos, Domine ..... ) was said by Peter Stevens ("the nearest we have to a clergyman"). The Club luncheon and wines maintained the high standard set last year. The loyal toast was proposed by Tom Arie as the most highly honoured by Her Majesty of those present. The toast of "Reading School" was proposed by Bill Mackereth as our most highly-ranking officer, and drunk, with acclamation, in 1953 Armagnac donated by an Anonymous Benefactor. The School Song was loudly and strongly sung.

The constituency of the event may be indicated (for the sociologically or statistically inclined) by the following analysis (the categories are not mutually exclusive): - Oxford 9; Cambridge 2; London School of Economics 2; Royal

Berkshire Regiment 5; Royal Artillery 3; Royal Navy 2; The Law 3; Medicine 2; The Media 3; Education 3; Business 3; Chartered Accountancy 6 (E & OE); Beards 3.

There were present: R.A. Alexander; Professor T.D.H. Arie; R.A. Bissolotti; P.R. Blunt; Dr. D.M. Bruton; P.R. Fiddick; T.V. Gould; Commander R.I.C. Halliday; D.J. Jordan; Brigadier W.A. Mackereth; D.E.H. Moriarty; M.J. Oakley; Major J.M. Perry; G.W.O. Price; D.J. Rooney; D.A. Russell; A.C. Simons; C.P. Smallbone; P.C. Stevens; Colonel B.J. Thompson; M.J. VanBrugen; M. Wolfers; C.A. Yeats.

Apologies for inability to be present were received from: A.A. Barker; A.W. Barker; M.J. Childs; J.D. Gardiner; B.J. Gould; R.P. Huggins; P.E. Long; J.C. Luker; J.T.P. McGuirk; J.F. Hodgess-Roper, Lord Roper; D.J. Rogers; M.J. Rogers; M.L. Shattock; The Reverend D.J. Weekes.

## Postscript.

*John Perry, whose championship of disabled ex-Service pensioners against an inefficient and doubtfully-honest bureaucracy has deservedly brought him national acclaim and Parliamentary plaudits, strongly exhorted all those present who are not yet members of the OR Association to join immediately.*

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# THE OPERA

By Frank Terry

**Over the course of the years I have noticed that any conversation with ORs of the pre-1970 vintage almost invariably comes round to the subject of "The Opera". It is evident that the School productions of the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas made a deep impression on those who saw them and even more so on those who took part in them.**

The first production seems to have been "Trial by Jury" in 1935. Hitherto the chief musical event had been the annual School Concert made up of short pieces for the choir, instrumental and vocal solos. The stars of the shows were invariably two masters with fine voices: D.G. Francis, a light Welsh tenor, and A.J. Kelsen, a resonant German bass. It may have been their availability which encouraged Mr. C.A. Nightingale (universally known as "Birdie") to undertake the first operatic venture. In addition to those already mentioned, who were cast as the Defendant and Learned Counsel, he was able to call upon Mr. S.G. Timms, whose diminutive stature and comically expressive face made him a 'natural' for the rôle of Learned Judge. Boys filled the other parts, including the female rôles, and the music was conducted by Dr. E.O. Daughtry (inevitably called "Draughty" by irreverent youth), the school music master, sometime organ scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge.

The show was voted a great success, but "Trial" is comparatively easy to perform, as it runs for only 40 minutes and there is no spoken dialogue; it was two years before Birdie was able to tackle a full length opera: "H.M.S. Pinafore". Messrs. Francis, Kelsen and Timms again filled the principal rôles and they were joined this time by Birdie himself in the difficult character part of Dick Deadeye and by Mr. Harvey who played the Bosun. Attractive scenery was provided by Mr. A. Rolfe, the assistant art master. (He was to perform this valuable service in a number of subsequent productions.) "Pinafore" went off very well and the School Magazine noted a little later that: "The popularity of Gilbert and Sullivan is now well established" and the School Concert of 1938 included two excerpts from "The Gondoliers".

Thus encouraged, Birdie's next venture was a bold one – the production of "The Sorcerer" in the Lent Term 1939. This opera was little known at the time, having been sadly neglected for some while, even by the professional D'Oyley Carte Company; but it has an amusing plot and a wealth of tuneful songs. Above all, it offered three good parts for the three staff members who had taken the leading rôles in the previous shows. Once again they came up trumps, especially "Timmy" as the cheap-jack professional magician, John

Wellington Wells. The magazine especially commended the performance, as Mrs. Partlet, the pew-opener, of G.W. Canning, a prominent figure in later years; town and county councillor, and President of the ORs Club.

The outbreak of war in September 1939 caused numerous difficulties for school life but the courageous decision was made to mount another production, albeit something less ambitious. "Trial by Jury" was chosen again, and to fill out the evening Birdie unearthed a mini-opera by Mozart, "Bastien and Bastienne", written



*Patience (1952) - B A F Moore, M J van Brugen, R P Huggins, "The Aesthetic Trio"*

at the tender age of 12, with a cast of only three. He and Mr. Kelsen translated the German text and Dr. Daughtry scored the music for small orchestra. Even this modest programme proved to be a major undertaking. Boys who stayed after school for opera practice had to grope their way home in the black-out; a spell of Arctic weather was followed by a flu epidemic, and a fortnight before the show half the cast were in bed.

But the production went ahead and was voted a huge success. It owed much to the versatility of Mr. Kelsen who, after singing the bass lead in "Bastien and Bastienne", undertook at short notice the chief tenor part in "Trial". The soprano rôles in both operas were shared by D.O. Forder and L.A. Sears, two very talented boys who played leading parts for years to come. Of Forder it was said: "He has the finest treble voice heard for many years."

1940 was a traumatic experience for everyone in this country, but despite Dunkirk, the Battle of Britain and the German Blitz, Reading School Operatic Society, undeterred, was soon back in action with a rollicking presentation of the "Pirates of Penzance" in December. Forder gave a brilliant performance in the testing part of Mabel despite being ill with gastric complaints throughout the week of the show, Sears again won





*The Pirates of Penzance (1964) - Chorus of Police, JJ Bristow (Sergeant)*

praise for his singing and acting as Ruth, the "piratical maid-of-all work". A gap of two years ensued during which Dr. Daughtry sadly died. He was succeeded by Mr. F.C.V. Davis, a jovial if sometimes irascible man, a fine violinist and experienced choir-master. He enthusiastically joined Birdie in a production of "Patience" in March 1943. The next ten years may be regarded as the hey-day of the Operatic Society. "The Opera" became a regular feature every March and drew in ever increasing numbers of boys of all sorts and ages. Fortunately there was never any clash between "aesthetes" and "hearties". The names in the cast include leading cricketers and rugby players, prefects, monitors and school captains. Just in case there were any Philistines who thought the boys in their house should be out doing athletics instead of attending opera rehearsals, the ingenious Birdie arranged for The Opera to be classed as a school activity which earned points for the Cock House Cup, and leading performers were awarded "Initials", on a par with School Colours in sport. (Birdie did all the calculations himself: nobody ever understood the arcane scoring system.) He also regularly scrutinised the School Reports of all his performers in order to prove that a boy's academic performance was improved rather than impaired by being in the Opera. There had always been a certain amount of double casting and this grew to the extent that sometimes there were three separate Choruses, each functioning on two nights of the week.

With performers, back-stage hands, instrumentalist, make-up assistants (under the direction of the chain-smoking B.L.R. Dowse) and others, the numbers of participants reached about 120 – that is, about one fifth of the school. In addition there was the wardrobe team of master's wives under the direction of Mrs. Nightingale, whose principal task was to make scruffy little boys resemble pretty maidens. Their skill in this art may be proved by reference to the photographs of those productions. Big School had no apron stage then and there was only one entrance to the back-stage area, so that space was at a premium. Even so, Birdie contrived to get plenty of movement from the cast, and

boys who had thought they had two left feet found, to their surprise, that they could dance a cachucha or a gavotte. By good fortune, the school produced a succession of outstandingly talented boys to take on female parts. Over the succeeding years the high standard of singing and acting set by Forder was maintained by L.A. Sears, M.J. Wild, R.H. Hunt, B.A.F. Moore, D.E.H. Moriarty, W.A. Mackereth and D.B. Cox. Of these, Forder became an actor and theatrical director of the Belgrade Theatre, Coventry; Wild is a composer of operettas, one at least of which has had a West End run; Moriarty became a BBC producer, having a hand in such popular TV series as "Face the Music" and "English Towns"; Cox became a leading baritone with Reading's major opera company, the Sainsbury Singers; Mackereth, on the other hand, ended up as a Brigadier in the army! The 1943 "Patience" featured R.F. Vernon as the Colonel of the Heavy Dragoons; he went on to become not a soldier but a highly successful character actor, rarely absent for long from the film or TV screens of the 1970s and 80s.

"Iolanthe" in 1944 earned much praise. Forder had by now graduated to a baritone rôle and Sears was a lively Lord Chancellor. The School Magazine's verdict was: "No (opera) production has been more attractive or more enthusiastically appreciated". A "rollicking" "HMS Pinafore" in 1945 saw the first appearance of M.J. Wild as a charming and sweet-voiced Josephine and the Operatic Society hailed the return of peace-time with an exuberant "Mikado" in March 1946. E. Cohen was a somewhat unorthodox but highly entertaining Mikado and the part of Pooh-Bah (the "Heavy") was taken by an OR – P.R. Mundy, a fine baritone who had shone the previous year as the Bosun in "Pinafore". Birdie fielded no fewer than three Yum-Yums (R.A. Jarvis, K Cotterell and J. Rampton) and there were 59 in the chorus – but not all on stage together, of course.

I joined the staff in the following September to teach History and English, but as soon as Birdie discovered that I was a singer he recruited me to give a hand with the next production, which was "Ruddigore". I was given the title of Assistant Producer and did some note-bashing and dialogue rehearsing during the long lunch-times we enjoyed in those days. (Three sessions of school dinners had to be got through in the crowded premises of the old Tuck Shop.) Eventually I was persuaded to share the leading tenor part with D.G. Thomerson. The first three months of 1947 are on record as being the most severe of the 20th century. From January to March there was continuous snow on the ground and the temperatures in Reading fell as low as 6 degrees Fahrenheit. The school's heating apparatus froze up and for several days we sat in the classrooms dressed in overcoats and scarves. I occasionally took Modern VI B out for a run round the school to warm them up. Significantly, in a generation accustomed to the privations of war-time, nobody ever suggested that we should pack up and go home, perhaps because most

homes, in a time of chronic fuel scarcity, were just as cold as the school. With all forms of outdoor activity paralysed, the Opera was the chief remaining interest, especially for the boarders, and "Ruddigore" therefore generated much enthusiasm.

With my close involvement in the show it was difficult for me to judge its standard dispassionately, but it seemed to me to be extraordinarily good, with some lovely singing and very effective acting. B.A.F. Moore was a most convincing Rose Maybud; D.W. Mattingley, an OR who had done long service in the Operatic Society while at school, frightened the life out of the juniors with a vivid portrayal of Sir Despard, the Bad Baronet; and the strange rôle of Mad Margaret was acted with a kind of eerie spookiness by R.H. Hunt. Altogether I felt that I had been part of a quite remarkable musical and dramatic experience.

Birdie now felt ready to tackle the most "operatic" of the Savoy Operas, "The Yeomen of the Guard", in which the music is more demanding than in any of the other shows. (Sullivan was working towards his Grand Opera, "Ivanhoe", which appeared a few years later.) Fortunately Birdie had at his disposal two very able young lads for the leading female rôles – D.E.H. Moriarty and E.N. Hey. He retained Mattingley for the part of Wilfred the Gaoler and asked me to undertake the tenor lead, Colonel Fairfax. The difficult rôle of Jack Point, the jester, was shared by B.C.F. Shadbolt, J.M. Perry and M.J. Wild. All did well, but Wild was quite outstanding. His tragic collapse in the final scene when he realises he has lost his bride brought a hush to Big School which showed how completely he had caught the sympathy of the audience. The performances were brightened by two beautiful sets of the Tower of London created by Mr. Rolfe. Mr. Kelson's report in the Magazine particularly praised Charlie Davis for the high standard of singing and for "chorus work never equalled at the school". There were 91 boys in the cast.

But "The Gondoliers" in 1949 was, by general consent, even better. A wealth of talent, both musical and dramatic, meant that no adults were needed, and most of the rôles were double-cast, with little to choose between the performers. The two gondoliers were played by B.A.F. Moore and D.B. Moore – no relation to each other, contrasting characters who had come up the school together in friendly rivalry, each possessing a very good voice, improved by sessions with Mr. F.C. Griffin in his unofficial singing academy. Moriarty and Hey shone once again as Gianetta and Tessa, and the concerted numbers between these four were of quite outstanding quality. Two other very good trebles, C.P. Smallbone and R.B. Steward, shared the rôle of Casilda. (The former later became a leading performer with the Sainsbury Singers; the latter was a future Captain of School Cricket.) Perry did well as the Duke of Plaza-Toro. Typically, this talented line-up included 4 current or future 1st XI cricketers and 8 members of the



*The Pirates of Penzance (1964) - M V Emans (Ruth), A A W Dominy (Frederic), P G Wildman (Pirate King)*

1st XV. I'm inclined to think that this was possibly the Operatic Society's finest hour.

Understandably "Iolanthe", which followed, was not quite as good, perhaps because Gilbert's legalistic humour was not as easily comprehended by boys of the 1950s. The two Moores once again did well as Mountarat and Strephon, and Moriarty, whose voice was now nearing the break, was an attractive Iolanthe. R.H. Hunt, last seen as Mad Margaret, emerged from retirement to wrestle, successfully, with the Lord Chancellor's difficult patter songs, and a promising new singer appeared in the person of D.W. Terry (no relation) as the heroine Phyllis.

By the following year Moriarty had graduated from alto to baritone and revealed a hitherto unsuspected talent for comedy in a marvellous performance of Bunthorne, the "fleshly poet" in "Patience". This was the swan-song of the Moores: D.B., now captain of the school, sang beautifully in the romantic rôle of Grosvenor, and B.A.F., now captain of West Wing, made a superb Colonel Calverley. (He became a professional soldier, but sadly died only a few years after being commissioned.)

Another comic talent was unearthed in the shape of M.J. Van Brugen (a foppish Duke of Dunstable) and yet another star soprano in W.A. Mackereth as Patience. It was another very good production.

The 1952 "Mikado" rivalled "The Gondoliers" as one of the best ever. Mackereth was an outstanding Yum-Yum and Moriarty a brilliant Ko-Ko. R.P. Huggins was a memorable Pooh-Bah (though some claimed he was just being himself!) and Hey did very well as Katisha. I was pressed into service once again to take the part of Nanki-Pooh, which entailed my having to perform the famous Kissing Duet with Mackereth, one of the juniors in my own boarding house. Happily we got through it and remained good friends (which we still are to this day.) The chorus, some 75 of them, sang splendidly.



*The Yeoman of the Guard (1948) -*

*J B Monk, G H Wilkins, H C Hickson, J Pocock, M J Moriarty, A J French, D G M Cheshire, R C Dibdin, J C Ramsey, R A Bissolotti, R B Larkinson, P L Carter, D J Rogers, A Carn, J M Perry, J A Clarkson, P G Stenning, P R Mitchell, R G Johnson*

*D T W Salt, J V Mack, D S Stafford, K Cotterell, P R Beavan, B Messias, J M Neilli, J T T Clift, P Batten, P E Townsend, M Bourne, D B Moore, K J Rhodes, M E Green, T P D Hawthorne, M A Hemmings, R J D Griffin, T C D Gadsby*

*D F Shelmerdine, A W Barker, J S Smailes, H R K Japes, J W Lamborn, D M Karsten, F H Coles, R P Huggins, C A Stephens, R L Waters, D R Holford, H J van Brugen, J Rampton, G C Culham*

*C A Wakefield, L J V Earchy, H B M Birtchnell, B C F Shadbolt, R D Goodall, M J Wild, D E H Moriarty, Mr F H Terry, J C H Prior, D W Mattingley (OR), E N Hey, P W Mundy, D R Harwood, K E Knight, J W Chown, D P Treseder*

*A Pearson, R S Willett, M I Burkham, J M Stacey, J A Hunt, L H Glass, M R Sales, B J Thompson, R S Scotford, C P Smallbone, R I C Halliday, C D Bell, R B Steward, W F Taylor*

This proved to be the final culmination of the Nightingale-Davis era, which had comprised ten annual productions of outstanding quality. Now the genial Charlie had reached retirement age. The eloquent tribute to him in the School Magazine said: "The progressive improvement of the operatic productions, particularly the choral singing.... has been due to his skill and enthusiasm. All those who have enjoyed these productions will share our warmest feelings of affection and gratitude". These plaudits were fully deserved.

However, Charlie was persuaded to come back for one

last show which, it was announced, would also be the last for Birdie. It was to be a repeat of the 1940 double bill – "Trial by Jury" and "Bastien and Bastienne". The trio of singers assembled for the Mozart was of quite exceptional quality: D.W. Terry had now developed a most pleasant baritone voice, equalled by that of J.C.H. Prior as Colas, the magician, and yet another brilliant treble appeared – D.B. Cox in the rôle of Bastienne. This production was a little gem and it was followed by a cheerful and well sung "Trial" featuring Moriarty as a very comical Learned Judge.





*Patience (1963) - P A Fryer (Bunthorne) & P J Callister (Lady Jane)*

At the traditional party in the Tuck Shop after the last performance Mr. Nightingale said his final farewell and was presented with what was then called a "wireless set" and Mrs. Nightingale received the Society's thanks for many years of devoted service as wardrobe mistress. The School Magazine later paid tribute to his remarkable skill in coaxing fine performances from youthful actors, to his patience and resilience and to his unfailing good humour. It concluded: "Thank you: well done, Birdie!"

The glory days of the School Opera might have been over, but that was not yet the end of the saga. In September 1953 Mr. J.D. Cox was appointed full-time music master. He announced that he wanted to create a School Orchestra – an admirable idea but essentially a long-term project. He seemed to have no plans for choral activity of any sort, certainly not Gilbert and Sullivan. Towards Christmas, Moriarty (now School Captain) approached me and said: "Sir, the boys all want to do another opera and Mr. Cox is not keen. Would you take it on?" This put me in a difficult position: I doubted the propriety of a purely amateur musician (which I was) trespassing upon the territory of the school's official music master. I went to see Mr. Kemp, the Head Master, and explained the situation. He had always approved of the Operatic Society – Mrs. Kemp even more so – and he said he would have a word with Mr. Cox. A few days later I was officially commissioned to present an opera next term.

I was at once inundated with offers of support: Frank Milbourn, Head of Mathematics, who for some years had led the opera orchestra, volunteered to raise the necessary instrumentalists; Ben Dowse said he would take care of the make-up and John Malpass the box office; Dora, my wife, offered to be wardrobe mistress and, most important of all, Birdie gave me his prompt book, with all the stage positions plotted for every scene, and assured me of his full support as assistant producer. And so "HMS Pinafore", 1954 version, was duly launched.

Fortunately there was an abundance of talent available. Moriarty, who had been a star for seven years, excelled himself with a virtuoso performance as Sir Joseph, and we had not one but two excellent Little Buttercups (C.A. Scroggs and M.J. Dare). Best of all though was D.B. Cox as Josephine. My wife dressed him, and Ben Dowse made him up, so skilfully that it was hard to believe he was not really a girl, and his clear treble voice was, by common consent, the best heard on Big School stage since the days of Forder. This was a memorable achievement. So, despite my woeful inexperience as a producer and conductor, we carried it off and, with 92 boys appearing on stage, the opera tradition was upheld.

However, in the following September Mr. Cox was replaced as music master by Mr. G.C. Moore (known to the boys as "The Mekon", from a facial resemblance to a character in the Eagle, popular comic in those days). He came with the laudable aim of widening the scope of school music. He wished to encourage instrumental playing and in time to form a school orchestra. He thought it was time for school vocalists to sing something other than Sullivan's music. He started a Madrigal Society and a Male Voice Choir and in place of the yearly opera he presented a series of oratorios and cantatas: "Messiah", "Dido and Aeneas", "Semele" and Britten's "St. Nicolas".

Carried along by Mr. Moore's effervescent, if somewhat naïve, enthusiasm, much was achieved, but in 1960 he moved to another appointment, to be succeeded by another young enthusiast, Mr. R. Burrow. He, very sensibly, aimed to carry on Mr. Moore's work but to combine the new trends with former traditions. Thus his first major presentation was to be a short instrumental concert combined with a production of "Trial by Jury", which I undertook to direct. Thus it was that in March 1961 the Operatic Society, rising from the ashes, began its second innings.

Everyone responded splendidly and a cast of 60 boys performed very creditably, led by D. Utley as the Judge and a fetching youngster, A.S. Tuggey, as the Plaintiff. (Like B.A.F. Moore and Mackereth before him, he ended up as an army officer.) It seemed natural that the success of the venture should lead to the staging of a full-length opera the following year. "HMS Pinafore" was once again chosen and proved to be quite as popular as its previous production in 1954. We had two imposing First Lords of the Admiralty (S.R. Lowe and P.B.L. Badham) and a smart Captain Corcoran (F.R. Terry); T.E.J. Lovett (who had been the Defendant in "Trial") used his pleasant tenor voice once again to good advantage as Ralph Rackstraw and P.R. Rado was a fairly horrific Dick Deadeye. One respect in which the opera broke new ground was that the orchestra was led by one of the boys, the highly talented R.S. Colyer, and there were no less than 17 other current pupils in the orchestra pit.



Mr. Burrow, who had done so well during his brief stay, left the staff that summer, to be succeeded by Mr. B.M. McBeath, a genial Scot with eclectic musical tastes who agreed to produce another G&S in March 1963. This version of "Patience" – rated by the School Magazine as "well up to standard" – was, in my opinion, the best of the post-Nightingale productions. We unearthed a new star in P.A. Fryer whose musical abilities were complimented by a real talent for comedy. In an entirely different way his Bunthorne was fit to stand comparison with that of Moriarty 12 years before. F.R. Terry again shone as a handsome and sweet-voiced Grosvenor, R.C.W. Piercey was a splendidly authoritative Colonel.

"Pirates of Penzance" followed in 1964. P.E. Coggan was a "masterly" Major General; P.G. Wildman a "most imposing" Pirate King; J.J. Bristow a "pleasantly solid" Sergeant of Police. The arduous rôle of Mabel was filled by C.D. Renshaw who declined to heed any of my suggestions but acted entirely in his own way – quite successfully, it must be admitted. Unsurprisingly, he grew up to become a highly distinguished professional producer of opera and musicals, reaching as high as the London Coliseum and the Sydney Opera House. The show was very enjoyable and extremely well supported. Although nobody realised it at the time it was to be the last of the line of traditional G&S productions.

The next year Mr. McBeath decided to put on three performances of "Messiah" instead of an opera and for the first time invited Kendrick and Abbey Schools to join in with the School Choir. They did so enthusiastically and the venture was considered a big success. A similar scheme was proposed for March 1966 but never came to fruition. (Haydn's "Creation" was the planned work). In September that year Mr. C.E. Kemp retired from his post as Head Master, to be succeeded by Mr. A.T. Davis. Mr. Kemp had always been a firm supporter of the Operatic Society (Mrs. Kemp even more so) but he had always let his music masters make their own decisions. Mr. Davis, young, keen and energetic, let it be known that he would like an opera to be put on in the Lent term of 1967, and Mr. McBeath and I began to plan a production of the "Sorcerer", not performed at the school since 1939. We took the bold decision to seek the co-operation of Kendrick School. It was readily forthcoming: they provided singers for the four leading female rôles and a chorus of 20 or so girls who arrived at the first rehearsal with a good grasp of their music. We had no difficulty in recruiting sufficient senior boys as male soloists and chorus. Relations between the two schools remained harmonious throughout and "The Sorcerer" turned out very well indeed. D.R. Bowgett, a former winner of the Boulting Medal for acting, gave a fine performance in the title rôle, and splendid spooky effects were produced by our enthusiastic lighting team. The orchestra was composed almost entirely of school members.

This might have marked the beginning of a new phase of

the life of the Operatic Society. The new mode greatly reduced the number of boys taking part by cutting out the juniors who had hitherto supplied the female element, but had other advantages to commend it. However, all such ideas were killed stone dead by the Head Master. He felt that the exam results of some of the boys had been adversely affected by their preoccupation with the opera during the Lent Term and he therefore decided to ban all pupils in their examination years (i.e. Forms 5 and 7) from taking part in further productions. Birdie, no doubt, would have been able to confound him with carefully compiled statistics showing that, on the contrary, operatic participants had all come out in the exams better than predicted, but I had kept no such records. Deprived of Forms 5 and 7, no decent tenor and bass chorus could possibly be assembled.



*Patience (1963) - B L R Dowse (Ben) on the job*

And so the Operatic Society was, in effect, laid to rest. Mr. Davis was no fool and must have known very well what would be the effect of his decree. Was the reason he gave the real one? Or did he perhaps mistrust the intermingling of the sexes which the new format produced? We shall never know. Under subsequent Head Masters the Davis edict was counter-manded and there have from time to time been productions of musical shows in collaboration with one or other of the local girls' schools – and very good shows, too. I particularly enjoyed Offenbach's "La Belle Hélène", performed at Queen Anne's School, and a more recent "Guys and Dolls" (with Kendrick, I believe), but there is no longer an Operatic Society as it used to be, in permanent existence.

Imperishable memories remain – happy recollections of shows infused with the enthusiasms of youth. A permanent bond of fellowship and artistic endeavour links together all who took part in them. How good were they? Who can say? But whatever the artistic merits they were of incalculable value in enriching the lives of Reading School boys over a period of some forty years. I am proud to have played some part in this.

# OUR SCHOOL

## EXCHANGING "DOWN UNDER" FOR "BLIGHTY"

*By Ron Wright. Australian Exchange Teacher 2002*

**It was a chance meeting in the Reading School Staff Common Room early in the year that introduced Margaret and me to a dimension of our year in Reading that we would never have anticipated. A gentlemen, obviously at home in the environment, though not one of the staff, approached me with the words, "I recognise that accent!" "I'm the new exchange teacher from Australia," I replied.**

Dr. Dudley Bruton's kind introduction led to invitations and hospitality for us throughout the year, and also my qualification as an honorary Old Redingensian, a badge I shall wear with pride and nostalgia on my return to Australia.

Our first engagement with the ORs was on April 27th, 2002, at the annual luncheon at the beautiful Boathouse near Amberley in West Sussex. The drive down the lovely A238 was alone worth the trip. At Houghton we were greeted with friendliness and warmth by everyone, and had the chance to get to know our 'table fellows' over an excellent meal. Michael and Audrey Smith, John and June Oakes, Matt Mattingley and Kerr Kirkwood chatted with us about travel, Michael's expertise on the geomorphology of the Sussex Downs, John's recent book about Reading School, and many other topics of interest and information.

The second official OR engagement was one not to be missed – an invitation from the Lord Roper to a reception in the Cholmondeley Room of the historic and beautiful House of Lords at Westminster on June 21st 2002. Again, many of our newly acquired friends and acquaintances were there, and we had the opportunity to expand our circle of OR friends as we conversed with several others, some of whom had come a long way to attend. Indeed one OR had returned from Australia to attend the evening. Andrew Linnell and some new Old Boys, staff and parents, represented the current Redingensians. Steve Bartholemew, who had travelled from the South, gave us in conversation a lot of interesting information about the history of Reading School, and the particular way schools function in England.

For an Australian, one of the fascinating things about living in England for a length of time is the difference between the two cultures and their many parallel systems.

Australia is just England transplanted with a little 'tweaking' to accommodate local conditions, but in conversations with people at functions like these we each begin to see the separateness and 'otherness' of the two cultures, albeit linked so closely by history, culture, and language. A vote of thanks from Dudley Bruton to Lord Roper, and a coincidental group trip home on the train to Reading, finished the evening. Since then at school functions and informally in chance meetings, we have encountered and been made welcome by many people met on these occasions. We are always astounded by Kerr Kirkwood's incredible memory – he never failed to remember our names and our personal stories wherever we met. The ORs dedication to, and love of, Reading School is genuine and deeply felt.

Our year has had many dimensions. The immediate school experience has been rewarding largely because of the students' involvement and ability, and the warmth of the staff. I will take away many memories, and have possibly left some odd impressions in exchange. I seem to have bewildered the Maths Staff with my obsession with fresh air in all seasons, which made my carpentry on the staff room windows an ongoing DIY project. As well, during one Maths lesson in spring, I had cause to pick up from the window, a wasp which was causing more excitement than my lesson, and let it have its freedom. The boys were stunned and one was heard to say in a stage whisper, "But he's an Australian!"

Reading's excellent geographical position gave us the best opportunities to indulge what we mostly love – theatre and history. We have made great use of Oxford and London, and have even participated in great moments like the Henley Royal Regatta and, fortuitously, many Jubilee events. We have visited every cathedral in England – even Durham – and every stately home south of Lincoln. We have toured from Dover to Land's End, and we even spent a week in East Anglia, apparently a foreign country to most English people! A huge highlight was the wonderful Commonwealth Day in Westminster Abbey attended by the Queen, the Duke of Edinburgh and Prince Charles. We cheekily introduced ourselves to Sir Peter Hall, Doris Lessing, Margaret Drabble, Michael Holroyd and Cherie Blair's father, Anthony Booth, to name-drop briefly!

We have seen (I hesitate to write 'feel

responsible for') some momentous losses this year – Princess Margaret, the Queen Mother, Spike Milligan, John Thaw – and have grown attached to and fond of Radio 4, Jeremy Paxman and McVitie's Digestives.

Although we have travelled many times to England over 25 years and have even managed to stay here for more extended periods as well, our expectations were overturned in the Reading Experience. Human beings often think they are in control and know what to expect, but life's not like that and throws up unanticipated and unexpected things at any moment. This year has seen an anticipated pattern of rabidly soaking up history through travel and exploring, of wallowing in excesses of theatre and music, of coming to grips with strange and arcane methods of dealing with everyday mundanities (we never really cracked the 'bill-paying' procedures of gas and water!), but overlaid, like 'chaos theory' with the shock of the beauty of the countryside in spring, the incredible friendliness of Oxford theatre audiences, our love affair with the Thames Valley climate (now that's been a source of sceptical wonder to many of our acquaintances), the way this region has fitted us as if tailor made, but over-ridingly, the warmth and interest, the caring, the willingness to help, the just plain likeability of all those people we have met. It is a wrench going home. You may have noticed that we have not mentioned cricket!

We would like to acknowledge, in particular – The hospitality of Lord Roper, the warmth of Dr. Dudley Bruton's welcome into the association, the assistance, welcome and hospitality – 'above and beyond the call of duty' – of Andrew and Juliet Linnell, the many shared experiences and hilarious conversations with John and June Oakes, the care and thoughtfulness of Michael and Audrey Smith, the many good times and kindnesses shown to us by Ned and Heather Holt, Brian and Sandra Turnbull, the History Staff, and of course, the Maths Staff. Special thanks to John Bonneywell for deciding to apply for an exchange year, courageously 'Down Under'. But the greatest impact on our time in Britain has been Reading School itself, the staff and students, the esprit of the place buoyed by its unique history and its ongoing, imaginative commitment to what we share – the belief in a good future grounded soundly in the best from the past.

# ***SOME REFLECTIONS ON BEING A BOARDER IN THE 1930S AND 1940S***

***By W.K.C. Morgan.***

The regular delivery of the "Old Redingensian" is a source of both information and pleasure. The contributions from the President, the Head Master and Who's Who etc. are usually interesting and well written but life at school in the 1930s and 1940s was not quite as replete with joy and rapture as some ORs would have us believe. I was just 8 years old when I became a boarder at Reading School. For the prior six months I had boarded at East Wing under the watchful eye of Gwyn Francis, who was then House Master, and I had attended Malvern House School. I started Junior School in Form 1B ("Old Tin Tab") and remained at Reading School for the next eleven years, probably one of the longest stays a Reading School pupil ever had. In Form 1B we were taught by a kind elderly lady by the name of Miss O'Reilly.

My father was in the Indian Medical Service and had been on leave. However, in late 1938 both my parents had to return to India. Because of the War, I did not see my mother again until the latter part of 1944 and my father not until 1946. R.L. Russel, whose parents were in Hong Kong, was similarly deprived.

Although I had grandparents in Scotland and in Hampshire, in those early days it was difficult at the age of 8 or 9 to travel up to Paddington, find my way to Euston and then sometimes have to change again at Crewe, before I arrived at Carlisle and caught a bus to Annan! Those were the days when the Blitz was in full spate and it was thought unwise for someone so young to travel alone in London and on. Hence several holidays were spent in East Wing along with two others who were in the same situation. Holidays at school were boring and the only relief available was "Daddy Peach's Library" which was located in Upper II of the Junior School.

Although Lord Woolton, the Minister of Food, had decided that the populace as a whole should have 1 ½ ounces of butter weekly with similar rations for many other foods, we were lucky if we saw anything other than margarine. The House Master and those who were in the Senior School needed more sustenance than us poor little "beasties". I remember, along with others, throwing sticks at a pear tree which was out at the back of East Wing in order to knock one of the rather hard pears down and eat it prior to going to so called late tea.

The younger Boarders in Forms 1B, 1A, Lower II B and Lower II A went to bed at 7:30 p.m. and lights were out by 8:00 p.m. Afterwards no talking was allowed. Our House Master crept around the various dormitories hoping to hear miscreants involved in conversation, but mostly we heard his shoes squeaking. If he did occasionally succeed in catching us it meant the cane the following morning. According to "SGT", boys of 8 to 10 required at least 12 hours continuous sleep. In reality, even then, those who looked after children, be they parents, paediatricians, or nannies, knew this was nonsense. The Day Boys stayed up until 9:00 or 10:00 p.m. and they showed no signs of sleep deprivation. Moreover, most of them were quite a bit plumper than us Borders.

All the Day Boys in Junior School came from their home either on the trolley bus or on bicycles. If they were late they were caned but that was always held back until Friday. Those of us who were in Upper II with Daddy Peach had to learn Latin "principal parts" viz. sto, stare, steti, and startum etc. – I hope I still have the "parts" correct; it is a long time ago. Daddy Peach expected ten or usually fifteen principal parts of various verbs to be learnt overnight. If more than one part was forgotten the pupil was caned. He may have felt, along with Jon Gay, that all boys should be "lash'd into Latin by the tingling rod". Daddy Peach was not as obsessed with the cane as Gay or John Boyer (JB) of Christ's Hospital. When Boyer died, Charles Lamb wrote "Poor JB! May all his faults be forgiven and may he be wafted to bliss by little cherub boys, all head and wings with no bottoms to reproach his sublunary infirmities."

In the eleven years I spent in Reading School, as far as I can remember, I must have been anathema to only two Masters. One was L.T.N. Hardy and we fell out when I was in the JTC. On one occasion the JTC went to Theale for exercises and to fire blank cartridges. While there LTNH tripped and fell into a ditch and emerged soaked, covered with mud and giving forth a rather obnoxious odour. Two or three of us burst into laughter and from thenceforth I was in the dog house. The others, whose names I cannot remember, were in 6th Modern and thus escaped retribution. I was unlucky enough to be in upper 5A and then in 6th Science! He appeared to be especially resentful on Saturday mornings when there was a chemistry lesson after the 11:00 a.m. break, when I often managed to escape early for the away Rugby or Cricket match.

While I was in the 6th Form, I was attempting to get into Medical School and was hoping to get into the second year by passing the first MB examination. This I had been doing at Reading University with Alan Watson, but he entered Medical School first and I followed the next year. I was grieved to hear of his recent death. About that time it was decided that Botany and Zoology were genuine subjects and we had a rather pleasant Master called Melsom who had seen active service, and did much to help us. I was informed by Hardy, in his inimitable manner, that I would fail in Chemistry and probably everything else. As it was, I passed all of them, with credits in Botany, Zoology and Chemistry and a pass in Physics. As to my success in Chemistry, this was due to Mr. Hardy's explicit teaching.

The only other Master with whom I fell out was Mr. Liddington. Two or three others and myself, who were in the 6th Form, decided to leave the JTC having obtained Cert. A. and to occupy ourselves less rigorously. One afternoon Captain Liddington was inspecting his platoon on the drive facing the School Field and just below Big School when we emerged from Cloisters and were brash enough to smirk at "Fred Karno's Army". This caused Mr. Liddington to explode. It looked as if we were being threatened with a firing squad or expulsion, so we made off as quickly as possible.

There were many other staff who were kind and helpful and whose classes I greatly enjoyed. One of those was "Booby" Woodford who taught us English grammar and literature from Upper IIIA to Upper 5A. He came from Worcestershire and appeared to be the solitary supporter in the Home Counties of that County's Cricket team. "Sugar" Saunders was also an excellent teacher, kindly and a supporter of the cricket team, as was "Benny" Dowse who coached the various cricket and rugby teams. What was also unusual was that I became a Prefect owing to "Archie" Meads who decided that I might conceivably be of some use even though some of his confrères did not share his opinion. "Booby" Woodford introduced me to Galsworthy long before the BBC became aware of this fine author. He also suggested that I read Stella Gibbons' "Cold Comfort Farm" and recommended Mary Webb who had written a number of books about Shropshire that had initially been received lukewarmly. "Booby" Woodford informed me that Stanley Baldwin had enjoyed her books and had written an

Introduction to her novel, "Precious Bane", which he had recommended to the House of Commons.

While I was glad I went to Reading School, my early years between 1937 and 1944 were far from joyful. Whilst not quite as bad as Dotheboys Hall, the life of a Broader in East Wing was vastly different from that of a Day Boy. When I look at the photographs in the "Old Redingensian", it seems that my colleagues who were Day Boys have attained a portly benevolence which I have never been able to attain, perhaps because as a "quack" one is so seldom left to sleep all night through.

Robert Morley put it rather neatly when he said "Show me the man who has enjoyed his schooldays and I will show you a bully and a bore."

## OBITUARIES

### **MAJOR GENERAL E.G.D. POUNDS CB RM. OR. (1938-40)**

It is easy to discern the future Major General Pounds from the valet published in the Reading School Magazine of April 1940. He was at Reading School for just two years and in that time his record was superb. He was in West House and gained House Colours for rowing, swimming and athletics in 1939. He also gained School Colours for athletics in 1939 and 1st XV colours in 1940. He was a monitor and a corporal in the OTC. He gained an RLSS Bronze Medal in 1939 and was a member of the Debating Society and the Drama Society. It was also evident from his early days in the Royal Marines that he was to be a great leader of men. As General Sir Ian Gourlay KCB CVO OBE MC said in his address at Derek's memorial service at St Lawrence Jewry on the 29th January: "Starting out with the King's Badge and going on to win the Young Officers' Sword, he was clearly going for gold. His whole life was indeed a search for excellence".

Let Sir Ian Gourlay take up the story from the time Derek was 17. "There was a war on, so he dropped his earlier idea of becoming an architect, and decided to join up. At the recruiting office a large Royal Marines Colour Sergeant put a hand on his shoulder and said, 'You're a well built lad. You'd better join the Marines'. And thus, so simply, were set for him the course and pattern for his life. Thirty-six eventful years later, this 'well built lad' was finally to retire from his chosen profession in the rank of Major General".

After training with 384 King's Squad at Chatham, Derek was awarded the King's Badge as the best recruit of his intake. By the end of his career he was unique in being the only general to wear the King's Badge (worn on the left shoulder of his uniform). He qualified in naval gunnery and served in Atlantic and Russian convoys, first in the rank of marine and later as an officer. He was selected for a regular commission in the Corps in 1942. He won the Young Officer's Sword for outstanding ability under training.

Late in 1944 he began a long and distinguished involvement with the Commandos. After qualifying at the Commando training centre at Achnacarry in Scotland, he joined 45 Commando, one of the Royal Marine Commandos, at the later stages of WW2. He then went to Palestine for the hand over of the British Mandate, then to Cyprus where he saw



*Major General Derek Pounds CB*

action against Grivas' EOKA terrorists, for which he was mentioned in dispatches.

In Korea, in 1950, he served in 41 Independent Commando Royal Marines. He first played a leading role in a 14-man team called Poundsforce in a decoy operation with the US Raiders on the West Coast of Korea. His force, and two platoons of Americans, was landed from the British frigate HMS Whitesand Bay in a diversionary raid at Kunsan. They had been told that there would be no resistance, but the enemy was there in force and after a bitter struggle Poundsforce withdrew with heavy casualties. They had, however, achieved the objective of creating a diversion for the US Marines who stormed ashore to their famous victory at Inchon. He later won the US Bronze Star with the combat V (for valour) as a Troop commander. He led a number of commando raids behind enemy lines, including the destruction of a railway tunnel 80 miles south of the Russian border and assisting in the capture of Kimpo airfield. The Daily Telegraph, in its balanced obituary, called him the unsung hero of the Korean War. It was said that had he been serving under British command he would have been awarded the DSO. Derek Pounds, one suspects, would not have thought about it like that. He was a man of great modesty.

He was Adjutant of 45 Commando when, in the Suez landings in 1956, an RAF aircraft mistook the Royal Marines Tactical HQ for the enemy and carried out a devastating attack, which caused around 20 casualties including the CO. His leadership in this nasty situation was largely responsible for the restoration of business as usual. He was always one for "getting on with things".

In the mid 1960s he commanded 40 Commando in Borneo during the Indonesian confrontation. 40 Commando arrived in Borneo on 14th December 1962 and they were to remain in action there for just three months short of four years. It was the only Commando to raise its own airborne troop when it took responsibility for an area of Borneo 140 miles long and 140 miles wide at its deepest point. In 1967 and 1968 he commanded No 43 Commando which operated from the UK.

He had qualified at the RAF Staff College at Bracknell in 1958 and undertook his fair share of Staff posts during his long career including that of Amphibious Operations Officer on Bulwark, Britain's first Commando helicopter carrier. In 1974 he retired, for the first time, and bought himself a bookshop in Exmouth, Devon.

Within a year he was recalled to fill a vacancy as Major General. His final appointment was in command of Commando Forces responsible for the operational command of reinforcement operations in Norway and Turkey and the development of Arctic warfare. In the early 1950s he had served in Hong Kong, where the Elders of Cheng Chau village awarded him a gold medal for his work with them. This award, it is said, gave him as much pleasure as the CB to which he was appointed in 1975.

On his second retirement from the Royal Marines he became the Chief Executive of the British Friesian Society, now known as Holstein UK, a job he undertook with his usual dedication, good leadership and enthusiasm for eleven years. When he took up the post he knew nothing about cattle but he set about it with characteristic determination and quick intelligence. By his final retirement he had reorganised the administration, introduced computerisation and safeguarded the interest of British dairy farmers by expanding export markets. On retiring from the Society he became a notable cattle steward and council member of the Devon Agricultural Association.



He was chairman of the Royal Marines widows' pension fund from 1987 to 1992. Derek Pounds died on November 7th 2002 aged 80. He married Barbara Evans, then a Third Officer WRNS, in 1944. She survives him as does their son and daughter, eleven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren. His, as General Gourlay said, was story of family and service.

*John Oakes*

## **DR. MARTIN HERFORD DSO MBE MC AND BAR**

**For most of his distinguished career in medicine, Martin Herford, who died in 2002, was a GP in Slough and a retained factory doctor. He lived a life of peace and good works as befitted his Quaker faith. Most of his patients would have been surprised to hear that he was, to quote his excellent biographer Matthew Hall, "the most decorated doctor of World War II".**

He was born in Geneva in 1909 when his mother, a doctor, was there to attend a conference on Freud. His father was a successful trader in India. For the duration of W.W.I he was in England and his parents were stuck in India. They returned to England as soon as it was safe to do so. They found a home in Reading and Martin attended Leighton Park School. On his 16th birthday he took matriculation but failed in Chemistry. His parents sent him to Reading School for a term to sort it out. Reading School has claimed an interest in this remarkable man's life from that time onwards.

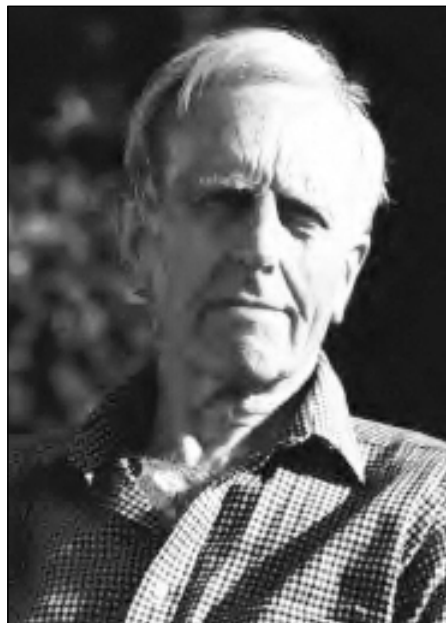
He went on to study for a general science degree at Reading University but left after a year to work at Pulsometer Ltd. After five years, during which he was not particularly happy, he managed to enter Bristol University to read medicine. When he qualified he went to Spain, where the civil war raged, to administer aid on behalf of a number of Quaker relief agencies. His aid agency was mainly concerned with helping children and, though apolitical, worked mainly in the loyalist regions which were subjected to the effects of Franco's economic warfare.

Returning to England after many adventures in Spain, Martin took a job in the ENT department of Bristol General Hospital. Whilst he was there WW2 started and he found himself in a reserved occupation. He was anxious to get into the action in some way or other. In February 1940 he volunteered for service as a doctor with the Finnish Aid Bureau in the Winter War in Finland. The Finnish Aid Bureau, despite its respectable front, had failed to choose its military leaders with care and, after some difficult experiences in Finland, Martin managed to get away via Russia to Cairo. There he joined the RAMC as a doctor in January 1941.

Within five weeks of donning his uniform he volunteered to join the ill-fated British expedition to aid the Greeks who were attacked by the Axis powers. He reached Piraeus on board the SS Settler on 11th March 1941. The Greek adventure was not successful

and the British and ANZAC troops were bundled out by a rampant German force. Martin won the MBE (Military) in Greece for his energetic services in arranging the evacuation of the wounded. The citation reads as follows:

"This officer was detailed to remain behind with 24 Casualty Clearing Station to await capture by the enemy and performed very good service. In addition he constituted himself liaison officer between the CCS and



*Dr Martin Herford DSO MBE MC*

the Ambulance trains sent up as often as possible to points varying between 5 and 20 miles from the CCS. When troops had withdrawn from the CCS area, communication with the CCS ceased, but Lieut. Herford, with the aid of a motorcycle, succeeded in making contact with the ambulance train as it arrived, so facilitating the evacuation of casualties from 24 Casualty Clearing Station which was able to withdraw before capture, having evacuated all its casualties".

Herford escaped from Greece to Cairo. There he joined No. 7 Motor Ambulance Unit and worked with remarkable courage in the battles of Operation Crusader in Libya. On 22 January 1942 he was promoted to acting major and given command of 16 Motor Ambulance Convoy which he was to lead with energy and distinction until 23 July 1942 when his jeep was blown from under him in the Western Desert of Egypt. Whilst recovering his health he missed Montgomery's famous victory at El Alamein.

He joined the allied invasion of Sicily and landed at Marzamemi, 40 kilometres south of Syracuse on 10th July 1943. He performed miracles of organisation throughout the Sicilian Campaign and won his first Military Cross when in command of an Advanced Dressing Station. The London Gazette published the following citation: "This Officer was in command of the ADS working with the Brigade Group. Although his duties did not compel him to do so, this officer

during the Sicilian Campaign was constantly amongst the forward troops tending to the wounded.

In Agira on 28 and 29 July, and again at Ragalbuto on 1 August, the work carried out by this officer, at times under heavy fire, was magnificent. His presence acted like a tonic to the men and the prompt treatment accorded by him to the wounded saved many lives".

Having crossed the Straits of Messina, he landed in Calabria on the 7th September 1943. By the 8th September he had won a Bar to his MC. This time the citation read: "On the 8th September 1943 during the assault on Porto Venere (Italy) an LCT (Landing Craft Troops) which had been shelled during the approach and set on fire arrived on the beach. Major Herford led a stretcher party to the beach to assist in the rescue and evacuation of casualties from the LST which was still under well-aimed shell from a flank.

This officer dressed several casualties which occurred in the LST during which time it was also dive-bombed. Throughout this period the officer carried out his duties calmly and without regard to his personal safety. By his coolness, courage and leadership he was the means of saving many lives".

After some time in England, Martin was posted to 163 Field Ambulance and took part in Operation Market Garden. He won the DSO in what is, perhaps, one of the most remarkable acts of courage and perspicacity of his career. The citation is printed in the Reading School magazine of July 1945 and reads: "On September 23rd 1944, 163 Forward Ambulance was moved to the area of Valburg to act as evacuating medical unit for casualties of the 1st Airborne Division from the North bank of the Neder Rijn, in the event of the relief of that division being successfully accomplished. Reports stated that there were 2,000 British casualties north of the river in urgent need of assistance and medical supplies. The medical personnel of the division was reduced to 18 officers and 120 other ranks.

It was planned that 163rd Forward Ambulance would accompany a force across the river on the night of 23rd-24th and would take across medical personnel and stores, but this plan had to be abandoned owing to the non-availability of craft.

At 14.30 hours on September 24th, Lt. Col. Herford, on his own initiative, organised a party consisting of one medical officer and four other ranks and crossed the river to the north bank in a boat loaded with medical equipment. The boat displayed the Red Cross flag.

Lt. Col. Herford was well aware that the north bank was held by the enemy and that all his movements might be under direct observation. On reaching the north bank he ordered his party to remain beside the boat whilst he alone proceeded forward with a view to making contact with the medical services of the 1st Airborne Division or making arrangements with the enemy for the completion of the

mission. Soon after leaving the bank he was made a prisoner. He requested that he be taken to see a senior German officer and, after some considerable time, his request was granted. He was permitted to contact the head of the German medical service in the Arnhem area and arranged for the organisation of a hospital for all British casualties. It was established in barracks near Appledoon.

Into this hospital 1,500 British casualties were collected and most of the medical personnel of the 1st Airborne Division were set to work. Lt. Col. Herford was largely responsible for the organisation of the hospital and the treatment of the casualties. When he discovered that the Germans proposed to evacuate the serious cases in ordinary freight wagons, he protested in the strongest possible terms and succeeded in ensuring provision of a properly equipped ambulance train.

When all the serious casualties had been evacuated from Appledoon he decided to make his escape. In this he was successful after an arduous and dangerous journey, and he returned to our lines bringing with him a nominal roll of the 1,500 British casualties remaining in enemy hands. He was, in all, 26 days within the enemy lines.

In carrying out this most difficult and dangerous task, Lt. Col. Herford displayed complete disregard for his own personal safety. His unshakeable determination resulted in adequate treatment being afforded to the British casualties in enemy hands and their evacuation to enemy hospitals under best possible conditions. His conduct all through was up to the best traditions of his corps".

At the end of the war Martin commanded 163 Field Ambulance, one of the first British RAMC Units to reach the concentration camp called Bergen-Belsen.

*John Oakes*

#### **TOM BUCKNELL OR (51-59) "A GENEROUS LIFE"**

**Tom Bucknell, who died suddenly on September 21st 2002, three days before his 62nd birthday, was proud to boast of being "Reading born and bred".**

He spent his youth with his five brothers at Southcote Farm, where his father John was a well-known and well-liked local personality. He attended Reading School before completing his agricultural studies at Reading University where he met his wife, Barbara. They then farmed at Holybrook and Bradfield Hall Farms.

He was a fine all-round sportsman, excelling at gymnastics, rugby, rowing and later sailing and golf, becoming captain of Calcot Golf Club. He also captained Old Redingensians at Rugby in 1963/64 and again four years later. John Cook, the present Honorary Secretary of Redingensians Rugby Football Club wrote the following about him: "He was a specialist in sevens where he played in the good club seven

at the end of the 1960s. Tom played scrum half for the seven, a position he filled in a unique way, combining the roles of ball winner, stopper, distributor and try scorer. This seven achieved some celebrity by beating a Wasps first seven which included two internationals. He did not gain a county cap but certainly played for Berkshire seconds". Tom's was a long playing career and he was in the first Redingensians veteran side. All in all he played rugby for Old Redingensians for more than 30 years.

Anecdotes about Tom, of course, are legion. The best amongst them is from the rugby field. It is said that Tom's dog, Deborah, having



**Tom Bucknell**

become incensed by the referee telling her master off for some infringement or other, ran on to the field of play and defended him by biting the poor man. A letter was sent to the Redingensians by the Berkshire RFU in which the following appeared: "I have a complaint from one of our referees....It appears that during the game he was savaged by a dog belonging to a spectator, the resulting injury to his arm requiring medical attention (and stitching). From hearsay, I learned that this is not an isolated incident concerning this dog...". This resulted in Deborah being the first, and probably the only, dog in Berkshire to be banned!

Tom was a councillor on Newbury District and, until his death, on West Berkshire Council. He brought sound common sense and good humour to local political affairs. He was completely lacking in ambition for himself and came to politics from a determination to help others. Both as councillor and chairman of West Berkshire Conservatives he showed leadership with a light touch but was never afraid to get his hands dirty, whether it was putting up posters or helping someone in his ward.

Tom gave freely of his time to many causes but his consistent modesty meant that few realised just how many spheres of Berkshire life he supported. This was demonstrated at his funeral when a fire engine with full crew turned up to recognise support that no one else

knew he had given.

He was chairman of the Oxford and Berkshire NFU and was active as a council delegate. He was a stalwart supporter of the Pony Club in Berkshire and gave huge amounts of time to organisations involving young and old.

He supported the boys of Reading School, inter alia, promoting rowing and rugby, most recently contributing generously to the 2002 1st and 2nd XV's highly successful tour of South Africa. He was also treasurer of the British Community Trust for Peruvian Street Children.

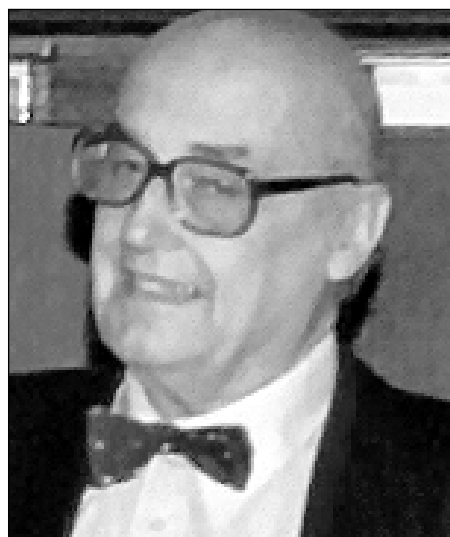
An intelligent and unassuming man, he was confident in his beliefs, politically and socially, while showing great independence of thought and action. His warmth, common sense, unwavering good humour, his ever-present grin and complete lack of stuffiness endeared him to friends and opponents alike and made him hugely popular across many strands of Berkshire life.

Barbara, his three children, Becky, Jo and Andrew, his brothers and many friends and colleagues will mourn his passing but celebrate his life. And so will the ORs. Tom had been a member of Council many times, but never President. Only a week or so before his death, he agreed to stand as President but only under duress because, with typical modesty, he would not push himself forward.

*John Illman*

**MICHAEL J ROGERS (50-53)  
Michael Rogers died on 19 February 2003 aged 68. He had been in poor health for some time, and towards the end accepted his position with fortitude and good humour.**

He joined the School in the 6th form where his main interests were shooting and rowing. He studied geography at Reading University where he was a successful chairman of the Rags Committee. His National Service saw him gain a commission in the Royal Army Service Corps



**Michael Rogers**

and with whom he completed a tour of duty in Africa. He worked in London for some years as Secretary of the Road Haulage Association, and later of the Flexible Packaging Association. He had a wide range of interests – in arts, science and business and was always good company for his many friends including ORs in London. His relations and friends will remember him with love and affection.

Our sympathy goes to his brother David (47-50) and his sister Susan and their families.

*David Rogers*

#### CHRIS KAYS 1983-90

As the President, John Illman, said in his letter to the ORs in this issue, Chris Kays was killed in the tragic bomb attack in Bali. There will be a memorial rugby match on 11th May 2003 and the ORs v School cricket match on the 28th June will be played for the Chris Kays Cup. Chris's contemporaries wanted his obituary to appear as a tribute combined with a report on these two sporting fixtures. This tribute and report will be published in the autumn issue of the Old Redingian.



*Chris Kays*

#### MICHAEL ANTHONY FREE (55-62)

Mike Free entered 1B and West Wing in September 1955. By July 1962 when he left for Loughborough College of Technology he had made his mark through outstanding personality and an enthusiastic participation in school life.

Though Wokingham born, for some time he travelled to school each term from Tanganyika, cap and tie, he claimed, always firmly in place.

It was neither his sporting prowess, though he was a good swimmer, gaining rep colours, and a diligent hon sec of cross-country, nor his academic distinction, but he was no slouch, rather his very zest and the attractive contradictions of his character that made the impact. Somehow, a laid-back approach combined with a volatile temperament and



*Michael Free*

tolerant views with a nonetheless firm belief in a certain order.

The latter was reflected in his rise beyond CSM to RQMS (an unusual appointment for a cadet) in the CCF. He had started with a share in the Recruit Cup and distinguished himself with awards and achievements on his way to leading the contingent.

Meanwhile, inter alia, he became a house monitor, school prefect, founding hon sec of the life saving club and the recipient of an endowed coronation prize to complete his years at school.

Loughborough gave way to London University where he gained his mech eng degree and there followed twenty productive working years in the West Country and Essex.

In 1967, by then a works manager, he married Celia. They had met in a production of 'Carousel'. Sara was born in 1971, and Marc in 1973.

Eventually they settled in Tendring and spent time extending their comfortable home. There they brought up their children in whom Mike, with good reason, took much pride. All the family engaged, with no little success, in a range of local activities, music and swimming well to the fore, Celia additionally involved with the Inner Wheel and Mike with the Freemasons.

Then, in 1985, Mike's job came to an end and, whilst he worked for some years on MOD contracts in Colchester, from then on life was not to be kind to him.

In 1994 a serious injury entailed a seven-hour operation. His health was permanently damaged and a series of problems blighted his last years, though Mike's courage and stoicism and above all Celia's remarkable support, concealed much from the watching world.

Mike was buried on 20 December at Edmund's Church, Tendring. Some of those present had, thirty years earlier, heard Celia's father sing Panis Angelicus at the wedding of his daughter to Mike. The recording, still fresh and beautiful, was played with great poignancy during the funeral service,

ORs in the crowded congregation included R L Towner, K C Brown and R H Carr.

*Ken Brown*

#### PETER JOHN BRIND

(55-62)

Peter John sadly passed away on 19th May aged 58 years. He was born in Bangor, North Wales and moved to Reading at the age of 5 years. After leaving Reading school he joined National Provincial Bank and spent three years in Branch Banking. He then moved up to London and joined their IT Division, finishing his career as a Senior Manager in IT Systems Development. He was a keen hockey player and played regularly for the Bank for many years.

Peter and his wife Pamela were both keen walkers, and spent many holidays walking the coastal footpath of Pembrokeshire. He was an active member of the Tonbridge Lions Club, and also Membership Secretary of Tonbridge Angle Indoor Bowls Club and on their Board of Directors.

Peter is greatly missed by his wife Pamela, their two daughters and two grandchildren, his parents Ted and Iris Brind, together with his two brothers and two sisters.

*Pamela Brind*

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# EDITORIAL

The Head Master has drawn our attention to the new face of Reading School. We must recall that the School has survived for so many years because it is adaptable.

The past, which by great good fortune seems forever sunny to many, is not so to us all. Boarding, heavily influenced by Arnold at Rugby and Eppstien at Reading, was not always a happy environment. The section in this issue called 'Our School' reflects two different views of Reading School.

It was the question "would I recognise my old school now?" that prompted me to ask Andrew Linnell to highlight the changes in the school and Chris Widdows to take a number of photographs of the new buildings which have sprung up in the last few years. I hope both of these contributions help answer the question.

## THE NEW BUILDINGS

*Photography by Chris Widdows.*



*Views of the Page Building (Maths, Technology, IT and Art) built on the site of the old tuck shop and opened on 5th February 1994*



*The new recreational area on the site of the old Horsa Huts which were demolished in 2002*



*The Kendrick Building (Library, Modern Languages, History and Geography) built on the site of Bounders Hall garden next to South House and opened on 5th July 2002*



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