

### **Where 'r' they now? – Noreen Morrison**

After my last article on Norman Morrison, I was amazed with the positive responses I had been given by teachers and students. This amazement was capped off when I received an email from Norman's sister (Noreen) asking if she could also have an article written about her sporting life. After my enjoyment in writing Norman's article, I had to accept this request and am delighted that Noreen has paid such a great interest in the 'r' and also the school.

Noreen Morrison (now known as Reen Stratford under her married name) studied at Royal Russell in the years: 1962 – 1972, from the age of 8. I was astonished to find out that Noreen and her brother, lived on the Isle of Arran, an island in the Firth of Clyde, in Scotland and it took them 2 days to travel to school! This was made even more astonishing when she continued to tell me that some of her teachers even went to visit on the island during holidays and that a memorable visit came in the form of her Cambridge House Mistress (Miss Gale) when Noreen was about 9 or 10 years old. I believe this truly showed the strong relationship Old Russellians had with their teachers and to what extent both teachers and students went, to maintain their strong bond. During her time at Royal Russell, Noreen: became Games Captain (Head of Sport) a Prefect, captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI Hockey team, represented the school at Tennis and also achieved the Victrix Ludorum every year during her time in the Senior School. Wow!

Noreen, of course, is from a very athletic family and she followed in her brother's footsteps to take up athletics at the age of 12 (specifically High Jump). Astonishingly, just two years later, she represented Croydon Harriers in an athletics competition and broke the World Age Group Record for 14 year olds! Noreen described this moment as the greatest in her athletics career and was the moment she decided to stop running and focus entirely on her High Jump. The lists of achievements continue, as Noreen represented Scotland, in the High Jump, at the age of 16 after a series of successful English Schools Athletic Championship campaigns.

After a hugely successful school sports career, she achieved a spot at Dunfermline College of Physical Education, in order to continue with her passion for sport. Astonishingly, during her time at College, Noreen decided to reinvent herself as a runner and within 3 years was picked up by the Scottish Cross Country team (as her brother, Norman, did). Although she didn't go on to compete in any major running tournaments, her ability to stay focused and apply herself to a sport she loves, to get to the best of her ability, is a dedication we should all strive to achieve. After leaving college, Noreen became a PE teacher and (like her brother) immigrated to New Zealand where she still lives today. Due to a leg injury, she was forced to stop her athletics, but was not downhearted by this incident, and Noreen quickly found another sport she loved in bowls.

After picking up the sport at the age of 50, Noreen quickly rose through the game of Lawn Bowls, representing New Zealand on multiple World Tours and 2 World Indoor National Championships (losing the Final in one of them)! At her peak Noreen reached 4<sup>th</sup> in the World Women's Singles Rankings, won 2 National tournaments at today is currently still competing with the Elite, hoping that her competitive days "wont leave" her yet.



I truly believe that Noreen's story of her time at Royal Russell and what she achieved after that is incredible and, along with her brother, will surely be remembered by the school for a long time and their sporting achievements never forgotten. Noreen finished her interview with myself by saying that her days at Royal Russell were "the best", especially her time in the Senior School, and has made many life long friends who she is still in touch with, as well as many of her old teachers.

Id like to finish this issue's article by saying that everyone should strive to succeed in whatever you love and if you follow the same example as Noreen and Norman, you WILL achieve. Never give up on your dreams!

Harvey Jones (current RRS pupil)