

'NO BUSINESS LIKE SNOW BUSINESS' - February 2009 and Winter 2009/2010



Royal Russell School closed down for 2 days on Monday 2nd and Tuesday 3rd February 2009, the first time since 10th February 1991, due to adverse weather conditions. These photos show just how deep the snow was in school and how the school driveways were impassable. On Wednesday 4th February school resumed for those who could get there safely, and a special 'Snow Work' website was set up for those unable to travel.

The winter came back early in 2009 and on 18 th December (the last day of term) RRS closed again. The UK had a white Christmas and the green grass didn't show up again for quite some time. We received this message from Brian Angel (1938-1947), our O.R. Historian, during a very snowy January 2010:



COLD? **WHAT COLD?**

Weather pundits bemoaning this year's January temperatures have had a chilly reception from some of our Old Russellians.

In 1947, our O.R. Historian recalls, snow remained on the playing fields well into March. A freezing mist cloaked the snowbound School, burst every bit of plumbing in the old St Andrew's House and other pipes in other houses. New gas fires were rushed into prefects' rooms, stimulating a roaring trade in hot profits from selling lukewarm toast. On 29th January the temperature dipped to "31° Fahrenheit of frost"! Week after week, most games fixtures had to be scratched. Playing the Old Russellians hockey team, the challenge was not to find the goal but – in 3 inches of snow – to even find the ball. Tobogganing, badly performed, down the fog-bound slope to Ballards Farm led to severe bumps and bruises and longer queues at the daily "Sick and Small Casualties Parade". This was already lengthened by legions of cold (and permanently cold feet) sufferers and the seasonally-injured from stone-encased snowball battles. In the dining hall supplementing the post-war meagre meat ration with vegetables no longer worked. The garden nursery had become rock-solid and would have defied pneumatic drills. So King Edwards gave way to a dehydrated sort of potato mixture. The laundry contractors were also hit and now fuel-less, thus depriving us of the capacity for cleanliness, a state already challenged by the scarcity of decent hot water. And so it went on.

So next time someone mutters how cold it's getting . . . just relate "The Saga of Royal Russell '47". They might detect a slight warming!

November/December 2010

On 30th November 2010, the forecasters got it right and it snowed and snowed. This time Royal Russell had 38 cm and the school closed from 11am on 30th November for the rest of that week, and re-opened on Monday 6th December. The school 'limped' through the

remainder of the term and when HRH The Earl of Wessex visited us on 10th December the snow was still in abundance. However, we remained open ... just!!