

'GROWING OLDER, BUT NOT UP!' by JOHN GEORGE (1967-1972)

I was just scanning the RR website, sparked by the email about a reunion in Sydney in August. I don't think I can make that as I am embarking on a new 'career' having bought a backpacker hostel business in Mildura in north west Victoria with a start date of mid-July, and it's 1000 kms to Sydney and a bit hard to get away.

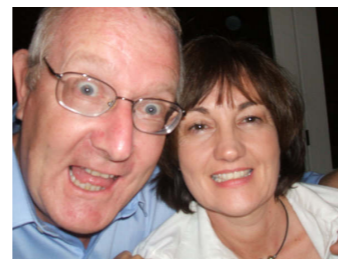
I was at RR from 1967 to 1972 and moved to Australia in 1974, lived in Canberra for many years. I moved to Melbourne about 11 years ago with my work. I spent most of my years working in call centre management roles, at airlines, banks and government departments. Travelling in more recent years, particularly backpacking in west Africa, made me think there is more to life than commuting, being stuck in an office and listening to people moaning on the phone, so I am going to test my lifetime of experience with this new backpacker venture.

Mildura is on the Murray River and is visited by many British and other backpackers who come to do casual work on the farms and vineyards in the area in order to earn a bit of money and a visa extension. I'm sure there will be children of my O.R. contemporaries who will pass through; I'm always interested in where people come from and their stories.

I married Sue in 1979 and have 3 now adult children. All have been in the UK in recent years and 2 did visit 'Shant' (RRS) in March last year. I haven't come across any other O.R.s in my travels since I moved to Australia except the occasional visit from Frank 'Pixie' Canning, an email or two from Noreen Morrison in NZ, the odd phone chat with Brian Hoskins and a short visit from Nick Price when he was in Australia last year.

Photos

Left: me and Dave, my brother (1967-1974); Second left: Sue, me and Ian, our youngest son; Second right: Frank Canning (1960-1972); Right: Pene (née Doyle) (1970-1974), Dave's wife and me. I think you know that Pene and Dave met at Shant and still live in Canberra. The best description for me is 'Growing older but not up and happily so.'



CLIVE WHITTENBURY (1940-1951)

It is now over six months since first being in touch with Bill Forster, O.R., who lives in the Hatfield area and is very familiar with De Havilland history. He encouraged me to pass on to the School a short version of my adventures since leaving the UK for the US in August 1954. Originally I had a Geoffrey De Havilland scholarship to go to DH in 1951 (after leaving Russell School) as an apprentice and pick up an outside degree from London. Remember, young Geoffrey was killed over the Thames when the DH 108 broke apart. The complication created by getting a place in Honours Physics at Manchester meant having to do both: an accelerated apprenticeship in parallel to University. The foundation that made this even thinkable was the superb education at RRS and the experience in making decisions and performing during three years of 1st team cricket. Three years in the DH aerodynamics department exposed to me the brilliance of DH design but the paucity of know-how in aircraft structures - after several Comet accidents and the 110 disaster at Farnborough (I worked on that aircraft in the two months before). I was anxious to go to the US to see how they did it differently, and then (dreams) come back and fix DH engineering. After two years into a Ph.D. program in the US, originally for a one-year experience, I was quietly asked to stay and become part of a new program at the new Douglas Missiles and Space part of that famous company. Few of us knew for sure what was going on until Sputnik went up in 1957, and then we were in a deadly race. I led the anti-ballistic missile R&D program at Douglas, contributed a tiny part to the Apollo program (and later attended the Apollo 14 launch), and then went to Washington in 1964 as part of the national security 'think tank' community. The last forty years has been a broadening variety of related work, with current work dominated by converting Boeing 757 into cargo aircraft and chairing a national review committee for the big fusion project at a place called LLNL. See web site at <https://lasers.llnl.gov/>



Above: Clive standing in front of a 757 conversion aircraft

Left: HRH Princess Elizabeth inspecting the Queen's Own Unit cadets in 1950, with Armory Sergeant Clive pictured second from right wearing his sergeant's stripes. CO 'Lanky' William Wright (Art Master) was in command at the time. The Army Cadet Corps insignia (lamb with flag on lance) had the Corps fondly known as the "Mutton Lancers."

APOLOGY FROM EDITOR

We would like to take this opportunity to apologise to Valerie Grover (1942-1954) for omitting her from the guest list at Pam Turtle's Garden Party in June 2008. She was pictured in the back row, wearing red trousers, white blouse and black jacket.

THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER -

PLEASE GIVE US YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHS!

Email: jpowell@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk or stanner@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk

Website: www.royalrussell.co.uk/oldrussellians



THE OLD RUSSELLIANS NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2009

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

MAY REUNION 2009

ROYALRUSSELL MUSIC

DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

ANNUAL DINNER 2009

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2009

RECENT VISITS

DID YOU KNOW?

BALLARDS MANSION

THE NEW LUNAR SOCIETY

ANNUAL DINNER 2008

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2008

ADDINGTON GENTRY

LOOKING FOR ..

A COINCIDENTAL MEETING

SLANGUAGE

GROWING OLDER by John George (1967-1972)

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APOLOGY FROM THE EDITOR

ANNUAL DINNER 2009

to be held at The Chateau, Coombe Lane. We would like to make this event a really big one, so please look at the website for all the info, and try to get tables together from your year group. More information is now available on Facebook and LinkedIn.

The objectives of The Old Russellians are:

- To keep Old Russellians in touch with one another
- To organise social and sporting events
- To publish a regular newsletter
- To keep Old Russellians informed on all matters of interest regarding the school

MAY REUNION 2009

and Family Fun Day. Everyone welcome, but we need numbers for catering, so please contact Julia Powell for your tickets. jpowell@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk

ROYAL RUSSELL MUSIC

Also known as 'Hugh Sutton's Fan Club', or the 'Hugh Sutton Appreciation Society'! Since Hugh came to Royal Russell as Director of Music 12 years ago, he has hugely increased the size of the school choir, orchestra, and the Choral Society and added the very popular Barbershop. Choral Society is open to Old Russellians and parents past and present. At the 2008 Christmas Carol Service in Great Hall, Hugh had a record 103 choristers, 13 of whom were Old Russellians!! So, any excuse for a Reunion, they all descended on the Crown pub after the service, and this will hopefully become another annual event. Hugh holds many musical evenings in the school during the year and it is well worth keeping an eye on the website for details of these. Recently we were treated to a wonderful rendition of Fauré Requiem and at the end of last term, to Vivaldi Gloria - we cannot stress enough just how professional these concerts have become - come along and see for yourselves.

Another member of staff soon to have his own fan club is our Chaplain, Steve Padfield, who joined RRS in 2005. RE is now a popular subject at both GCSE and A Level, and Steve also takes a lot of time and trouble with the organisation of Chapel Services throughout the term on Sunday evenings. Again, these can be found on the website as well as here in the newsletter, and are well worth attending - all O.R.s are welcome to attend all concerts and services.



DONATIONS AND BEQUESTS

ANY OLD RUSSELLIAN WISHING TO LEAVE A BEQUEST TO BENEFIT THE CURRENT SCHOOL AND PUPILS SHOULD USE THE TERM 'RUSSELL SCHOOL TRUST' (NOT ROYAL RUSSELL SCHOOL) IN THEIR WILL TO AVOID ANY CONFUSION WITH THE ORIGINAL CHARITABLE TRUST. MORE DETAILS REGARDING THIS ARE ON THE WEBSITE. IF ANYONE WISHES TO DONATE A GARDEN SEAT IN MEMORY OF A FORMER RUSSELLIAN, PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION.



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2009

Tuesday 24th February
The new 'Lunar Society'
See inside for details of this new (free of charge) initiative

Sunday 1st March
Chapel Service 6pm

Sunday 15th March
Lent Choral Service 5.45pm

Saturday 28th March
O.R. Football Tournament & Girls' Netball from 1.30pm - Information from Steve Greaves at stevejgreaves@hotmail.com and Jane Bruce at janeannebruce@hotmail.com

Sunday 26th April
Chapel Service 6pm

Saturday 16th May
O.R. May Reunion and Family Fun Day

Friday 12th June
Royal Russell Riverside Reunion - The Old Thameside Inn, Bankside. 7pm onwards
Everyone welcome!

Sunday 21st June
Choral Evensong 5.45pm

Saturday 27th June
RRS Summer Ball
Please check website for details nearer the time

Friday 4th September
Recent Leavers' Social Event at Coombe Lodge from 5.30pm onwards

Friday 27th November
Annual Dinner at The Chateau

OTHER EVENTS ARE ORGANISED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR - PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS: www.royalrussell.co.uk/oldrussellians

RECENT VISITS TO RRS

Have you visited your old school recently? If not, you would be most welcome to do so when next in the area. Contact Julia Powell if interested (jpowell@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk). Julia gives a most interesting tour and for those of you who left the school before 1977 she can even find records of your entry and some conduct records too – but you may not want to see those!?

Francis MacMahon (1939-1952) and Shirley Harrison née Stothart (1944-1950) visited the school in November. Both were excited to see the new development coming on so well and were amazed at how the buildings and facilities have changed since their days at school. Francis has left his mark on the school notice boards along top corridor as his name appears alongside the Tapling Exhibition prize for writing in 1949 and twice as School Captain. As we walked around the buildings old memories came flooding back and several old tales of what happened here or “where have all the trees gone?” were told or asked. The size of the school has obviously increased since the early 50s but what impressed both was the fact that the children seemed so involved in their lessons. Perhaps they were not so good themselves in class!



Bill Soper (1966-1969) As well as attending the Sydney Reunion in August 2008, Bill was over in the UK for a family party in November, and took the opportunity to revisit his school after nearly 40 years. He said to the Headmaster, “I wouldn’t be here today visiting my old school if my old school had not visited me in August!” Bill can be seen here looking through the entry register showing his own father’s entry, and also his father’s name on the Honours Board from 1926!



Michael (Mick) Ayles (1946-1950) and his wife (pictured below) came back to school to visit places that he fondly remembered and also to admire the newer and revamped facilities that the pupils of today take for granted. Michael had good memories of school and was most impressed at how well the students were behaved. Was he so good at school? He was not quite so sure!



DID YOU KNOW?

During WW2, in order to save energy, schoolboys at Ballards were only allowed baths two to three times a week. They were allowed just 5 inches (12cm) of lukewarm water per bath, Baths were marked and prefects checked that you did not have the depth deeper than your allowance. ‘Stewing’ in a bath, for some time was considered a luxury although by the end the boys were warming the water!



School Gates: We are given to understand that these gates were taken down towards the end of World War 2 to provide metal for guns. But we are not sure if this is accurate. Please let us know what you remember.

BALLARDS MANSION

Article received from Richard Dadson (1947-1955)

As for the old mansion (as it really was!), it was a bit of a flea pit, but the Music Room was pristine, with its polished wooden floors and panelled walls. Entry was forbidden unless summoned or for music lessons/practice. There was also a Staff Common Room, comfortably furnished and into which Ballards first TV set was installed in time for the Coronation in 1953. Those who did not have an exeat for that day were allowed to watch the events of the day on the black & white TV. I was fortunate enough to be able to see the Coronation Procession from The Mall, where I slept out for two nights with my mother. In 1951, a group from the school was invited to watch the opening of the Festival of Britain by King George VI. This event took place on the steps of St Paul’s Cathedral right outside the School’s Offices which were then located at 4 St Pauls Churchyard. The fortunate few were those from both Purley and Ballards who had been Top of Class in the previous academic year. This meant six from each school. I was lucky enough to be the one from my class. As rationing was still in force, the sandwiches at this event were an even greater treat than watching the opening!! Another treat at that time, also accorded to those of us who were top of the form, was a Christmas visit to Harrods at the invitation of Sir Richard Burbage, who was then Chairman of Harrods and a great friend of the School. We were given the freedom of the Toy Department, before having a magnificent ‘slap-up’ tea after which we were each given a parcel containing a super gift from the department. Yet another treat - this time for the whole of both schools and which occurred for a number of years, was the fresh strawberries provided in June by Mrs Gerald Bentall, wife of the Chairman of Bentalls of Kingston-on-Thames.

Picture received from Ewald Schroder (1977-1984) of Ballards Mansion (formerly St Andrew’s House) and the current Headmaster’s House on the right hand side



THE NEW LUNAR SOCIETY

This is a new school society aimed at anyone in our community who enjoys intellectual matters and the company of others. As such it is open to sixth form students, staff, parents, past parents and O.R.s. We will aim to offer some twelve visits a year of which we hope some will interest you. Anyone wishing to attend should email Martin Tanner on mtanner@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk. The first event to be announced, but not necessarily the first we will go to, is: Better than a Thousand Words led by Professor John Barrow FRS, University of Cambridge. He will look at the role of pictures and images in the development of science. From the first graphs and illustrated books to Molscript, the influence of the first pictures of spiral galaxies on Van Gogh’s ‘Starry Night’, to the artistic resonances of the Hubble Space Telescope’s images, the mushroom cloud of the atomic bomb, and the intricacy of fractals, we will see how pictures have influenced science and spearheaded its communication to the public today. This lecture will be held at The Royal Society and is free of charge!

ANNUAL DINNER 2008

2008 saw a total change for those O.R.s attending the Annual Dinner. It was free of charge and held in an informal manner at the Headmaster’s House. Everyone had the opportunity to chat to everyone else, and this was much appreciated and enjoyed by all. We started the evening, as always, with the AGM - over and done with in a record 25 minutes. Then we walked over to the HM’s House where we were greeted with champagne and nibbles in true Headmaster form!
Below Left: Chris Gough (1951-1955) and Karl Yabsley (1978-1982)
Below Right: LtoR: Jon Davis (1987-1992), James Lacey (1988-1993), Henry Alger (1991-1996)



After this we were treated to a delicious supper and much good conversation, including some very good ideas for the future of the O.R.s which is more exciting than ever. A few decisions will need to be made at the next committee meeting in January 2009, so watch this space!!
Below Left: Twins Derek and Peter Taylor (1944-1952)
Below Right: Karen and John Killey (1945-1951) from Australia!!



A COINCIDENTAL MEETING by Chairman Karl Yabsley (1978-1982)

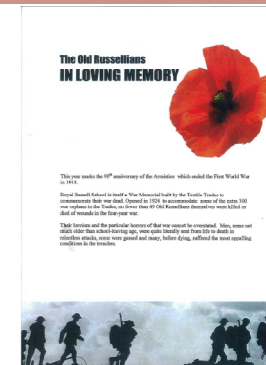
Whilst attending a Chapel Service in December, I was pleased to meet an Old Russellian, Nick Hook (1978-1982) who had recently been working at the Deputy Head’s house. It transpired that we were both in the same year at RRS (having joined at the same time), and also in the same house (St.Andrew’s), a pleasant coincidence. We both left RRS in the summer of 1982. I have known Nick since we were 9 or 10, when we were both at Cub Scouts and Sea Scouts in Addington. Our sisters are friends with one another too, and have been for several years. SPORT: We played in the same School football team (U14 XI) whilst Russellians. Nick and I also played in the RRS Headmaster’s (Ronald Balaam) Golf match at Croham Hurst Golf Club in the summer of 1981. I believe Nick also went on the RRS ski trips that I went on in 1980 (Italy) and 1981 (France).

‘SLANGUAGE’ continued ...

Well we had no idea how many ‘cans of worms’ the name ‘Bugs ‘ole’ would open. We have received a few emails regarding the origin of this name. Apparently it is nothing to do with headlice in St Andrew’s House! This from Pat Bygate (1946-1951):
“Both Stuart Adams (1946-1950) and myself can remember the term being in use during our 1940s attendance, long before any outbreak of headlice! We both think it was in pre-war use. Stuart because of comparison of the old house with the much newer school buildings, and because plenty of creepy-crawlies could also have found their way in via all the ivy covering the walls! I remember it being used by a 1930s senior O.R. in the St.Andrew’s changing rooms after a match.”
... and this from Richard Dadson (1947-1955)
“It most certainly did NOT originate from any outbreak of head lice. I moved to Ballards from Purley in 1948 and, in line with practice at that time, all first year pupils were accommodated in St Andrew’s before moving to their actual houses in the second year. In my case, this was Oxford. St Andrew’s House was known as Bugs ‘ole at the time of my arrival there, so in all probability picked up the nickname during or even before WW2. I am very much of the opinion that it came from boys making a comparison of the old house with the so much smarter main buildings of the school which were built only in 1923. Not only did the name refer to the venerable old building itself, but it was also how the boys knew the school ‘house’ - so it was Oxford, Cambridge and Bugs ‘ole! Members of that house were fondly regarded as second class to the other two houses, and for Bug’s ‘ole to win anything was a bit of a come down for the rest!”

REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 2008

At Remembrance Sunday 2008 past and current pupils remembered their war dead. ‘In Loving Memory’ is a ‘90th Anniversary of the Armistice’ supplement, especially remembering two Old Russellians, Austin Rich and Frank Austin, and can be downloaded from the Features page of the website, under the same title.



ADDINGTON GENTRY

A local enthusiast and archivist, Lindsay Ould, has put together a walk around the Ballards area, Heathfield and Coombe Wood highlighting Victorian and Edwardian residents. Please click on the link in the Features page of the website to download this historic walk. Even if you don’t do the walk, the contents are very informative.

LOOKING FOR ...

The Old Russellians database now contains over 5,000 contacts, but we still need more. Did you attend the 2003 Dinner? If so, we may not have your email address. Please look at the website for all those people from that Dinner who we are looking for. Also ...
Carrie Meldrum (1968-1972) is looking for:
Jane Ward and Christine McCarthur
Ex teacher, Julia Fenlon, is looking for Dale Wright who was Matron of Reade House and wife of William Wright (Art Master) in the 1960s