

SCHOOL PHOTO 1949



CHOOOL.
The Official School Photo taken in 1949 shows Constance West as a teacher, 6th from right

JUNIOR SOCCER 1970



Soccer P - Junior Departmental Team
Back L to R: G Kirkby, D Spencer-Thirwell, B Taylor,
R Murray, P Lamberth
Sitting L to R: M Harris, P Reynolds, M Phillips, R Gaizley, I Windle
Front L to R: G Davison, P Gray

LOOKING FOR ...

Old Russellian, Roger Fletcher (1942-1949) is looking for: Glyn Taylor, Norman McDougall, Peter Smith of Harpenden.

Old Russellian, John Bartlett (1954-1965) is looking for James Brown (1954-1961) dob 1.4.49.

Please let us know if you know the whereabouts of any of the above people. More on the website ...

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.

'BALLARDS DAYS' UPDATED

Pat (known as Bruno) Bygate (1946-1951) recently updated his superb memoirs from his time at Ballards. The original script was entitled 'Ballards Epistle' which he has renamed 'Ballards Days' and added photos from those times in the late 1940s. This can be found in the Archive pages of the website. Pictured below is Pat at Sports Day 1949 with his mum and grandma.



ANNUAL DINNER 2008

Thanks to all those of you who kindly completed the questionnaire that we enclosed with the Spring Newsletter. Your comments were discussed by the committee at the meeting in April, and the following has been decided:
2008 Dinner: To be held at School on Saturday 29th November
2009 Dinner: To be held at The Chateau, Coombe Lane, Croydon, on Friday 27th November
Post 2009 Dinners: Venue to be decided by Committee.
Invitations will be sent out as normal with the Summer Newsletter and details will also be included regarding the 2009 Dinner.
There will be a discount for people who pay for their ticket this year for next year's Dinner.

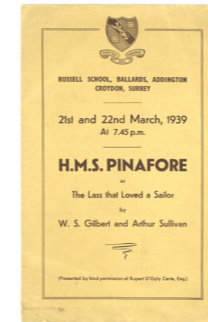
FAREWELLS

This summer we will say a sad 'Farewell' to Mr Chris Hedges (Prep Headmaster), to Mrs Suzie Dodsworth (Head of ICT) and to Mrs Rose Gedney (former Head of Geography). Rose will be returning on a part-time basis in the Autumn Term. We will report on their time at RRS and their Retirement Parties in the Autumn Newsletter.



HMS PINAFORE March 1939 and April 2008

Old Russellian, Roger Billington, and his wife, Phyl, were treated to a trip down memory lane when they recently attended a musical performance of HMS Pinafore by our current Choir and Choral Society. Roger played the part of Josephine in the production in March 1939! At that time it was the first opera of any kind to be performed in the history of Royal Russell. This year the parts were ably performed, under the direction of Hugh Sutton (Director of Music) by current pupils, parents and staff. Mr Christopher Hedges (Prep School Head) sang the part of Rt Hon Sir Joseph Porter, KCB.



Above: 1939 Programme, Right: Josephine in 2008 with Roger Billington, Far Right: Little Buttercup and Chris Hedges, Below: Roger as Josephine in 1939



O.R. Brian Angel writes:

The first opera of any kind in the history of Royal Russell was "HMS Pinafore", performed here in March 1939, almost seventy years ago. I was seven and too young to join the excited groups from the Middle School and Senior Girls' School who were bussed over from Russell Hill Purley for the two performances. The looming war with Germany was just six months away and led the "Croydon Advertiser" critic - in a fit of surging patriotism - to report: "Gilbert and Sullivan in Russell School's curriculum needs little justification. It embodies a peculiarly English humour with equally native sincerity in tuneful music. How badly a sense of humour is needed in this world. Just look across the Rhine at a nation to whom Providence has denied such gifts. And Heaven knows we need the virile strains of melody."

Maybe Bach, Beethoven and Handel would not like being termed 'tuneful' anyway, but the 'Advertiser' was joined in the audience's enthusiasm by a celebrated D'Oyly Carte professional, a 'Miss Shedden'. They went on to applaud our production in which (I quote) "The whole cast, unbelievably, from chorus to leading lady, was made up of forty-four boys and only one had reached sixteen ... the sailors' choruses revealing quite a creditable body of tone. Treble youngster Roger Billington as Josephine was not altogether at home in his clothes but gave Gilbert's wit added vivacity with recitation-to-music good. David Evans, displaying the greatest histrionic gifts as Sir Joseph Porter, modelled his style cleverly with rhythm good and footwork neat, having learned the difficult art of keeping still on stage. George Gray's solos and singing gifts as Captain Corcoran needed a little more confidence, whilst Little Buttercup, played by William Organ, sang her songs well, in a charmingly demure and most pleasing performance.

"Mr Howard Cundell as producer, Mr Leslie Smith as musical director, Mr Crispin Smith as stage manager, Mr Wright and Miss Cundell on make-up all deserve one's praise. One went home with the glow of Gilbert and Sullivan's fun rekindled in one's heart. It was a grand choice of play. The Head Master in particular, whose guiding hand was behind the whole production, deserves our warmest congratulations."



Roger Billington (Josephine, the Captain's daughter) George Gray (Captain Corcoran, Commanding HMS Pinafore) David Evans (The Rt. Hon. Sir Joseph Porter KCB, First Lord of the Admiralty) William Organ (Mrs Cripps, Little Buttercup, a Portsmouth Bumboat Woman)



Pictured above: Hugh Sutton (Director of Music) being gagged and tied up by the shipmates - wonder if Captain Jack (Martin Tanner) had anything to do with this? Right: Chris Hedges, Far Right: Martin Tanner



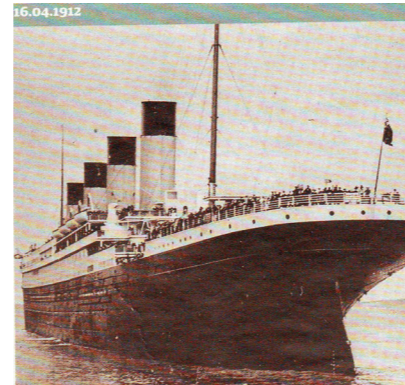
SUMMER 2008

OBITUARY: BARBARA JOYCE DAINTON (nee WEST) One of Only Two Living 'Titanic' Survivors



We sadly record the death of Barbara Dainton, (nee West) aged 96. Her funeral was held in Truro Cathedral in November 2007, commemorating a life of great humour, scholarship, reading, travel and adventure. Her school years were 1918 to 1927 when she gained a Distinction in Geography and won the Victrix Ludorum. She enjoyed a lively involvement in Old Russellian activities and well into the 1960s would return to Russell Hill to play hockey against the School. The O.R. teams included her elder sister, Constance Miriam West (school years 1914 to 1924) who later became a Teacher, Housemistress and Leader of the Girl Guides at Russell Hill. Constance died of cancer in 1963 in Penzance, Cornwall.

*Barbara West,
winner of the Victrix
Ludorum Glanfield
Shield in 1927*



It is believed the Titanic struck an iceberg in the north Atlantic

**Titanic sinks with more than
2,000 souls on board**



Barbara (back left) and Constance (back right) West in the O.R. Girls Hockey matches against the School

Barbara lived on to become the last but one survivor of the 'Titanic' disaster. A babe in arms at just 10 months and 18 days old, she was one of the youngest to survive the disaster. Her 33-year-old mother, who was pregnant at the time, and her elder sister, Constance Miriam, were rescued but her father, Edwy Arthur West, drowned along with 1,520 other passengers and crew. The "unsinkable" White Star liner RMS Titanic, bound for New York on her maiden voyage, had struck an iceberg shortly before midnight on 14 April 1912 and sank in just four hours. The exceptional horror of that tragic night in history still has resonance today, nearly one hundred years later.

Born on 24 May 1911, Barbara was the second daughter of Edwy, popularly known as Arthur, and Ada Mary West, both originally of Truro. After their first child Constance was born on 13 August 1907, they moved to Bournemouth, where Arthur then worked for the department store of J.J.Allen as a shopfloor walker. But he was seeking a better life for his family and he opted to emigrate to Florida, attracted at the time by fruit culture companies in Gainesville offering good wages ... and a sunshine lifestyle for his growing family.

Travelling 2nd class on family ticket number 34651 at a cost of £27.15s (about £950 in present day values), the Wests boarded the Titanic at Southampton mid-morning on Wednesday 10 April 1912. They embarked aft of C deck, joining 274 other second class passengers, through the main entrance by the red-carpeted stairway, bordered by light oak railings on this vast, new and exciting liner, one-sixth of a mile in length.

The following Sunday at 11.40pm, the liner was some 280 miles south of Newfoundland on a bitterly cold, clear night on a calm moonlit sea. Mrs West: "We were all asleep but just gently jolted. My husband and the children didn't even wake up." Meanwhile the card games continued in the second class saloon, one player jested among laughter, "Chance now of extra ice in our Whiskey!"; a steward assured one inquisitive lady, "God himself could not sink this ship". The Bridge acknowledged disinterestedly a crew member's report of an iceberg collision ... and the band played on. Just along from the Wests' cabin was a young science master from Dulwich College, Lawrence Beesley, who felt what he thought was just a roll of the ship, twice. Then possibly a slight tilting. Curious, he opened the door and saw chief steward John Hardy running down the corridor, "Everybody on deck! Lifebelts on, at once!" Mrs West by now had roused the others and quickly heeded the steward's warning to take plenty of warm things. "Arthur tied the lifebelts on Barbara and Constance and carried them to Boat Deck and I followed carrying my handbag. Arthur then rushed back for some hot milk for Barbara, returning to our Lifeboat Ten which was already lowered. Using the rope, he dropped the thermos flask for me." At this point some of the crew were rigorously enforcing the rescue discipline of "women and children first" and, believing Arthur was attempting to join his family, they held him back at pistolpoint. ("You go, I'll stay awhile."). It was later learned that all children in second class survived but only eight per cent of second class male passenger did so.

*Lifeboat Ten
carrying Mrs
West, Barbara,
10 months, and
Constance,
aged 4*



Pictured above: Barbara West at 1927 Russell Hill School Prize-Giving (Geography Distinction), Lady Pettigrew presiding. Barbara, a Saxon House prefect, then went to the sports pavilion to be awarded the 1927 Victrix Ludorum. Pictured above right is the Shield as it is in 2008, with Barbara's inscription towards the bottom right of the shield.



Because of Arthur West's earlier employment in the textile trades, both Constance and Barbara qualified as necessitous. Mrs West had no means to support the children, apart from a small sum from the Titanic Relief Fund, and they were later admitted to the Warehousemen, Clerks & Drapers' School at Russell Hill, Purley.

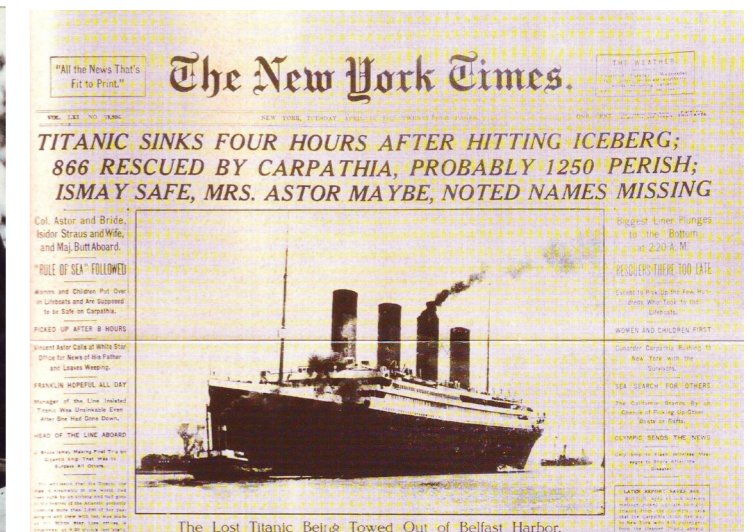
On leaving in 1927 Barbara went on to Truro Girls' High School and St. Luke's College, Exeter, where she took a teacher training course in physical education and geography. She then became governess to a Cornish family and moved with them to Spain until the outbreak of the Spanish civil war in 1936. She returned to England and to a teaching post at Guildford High School, Surrey. She was remembered as a madcap, always game for an adventure, cycling once from Guildford to Plymouth. In 1938 she met and married Stanley Winder, a rugby-playing Mancunian, a marriage lasting 13 years before Stan died from a heart attack, but his love of rugby remained with Barbara. She and her second husband William, known to all as Dee, were regular visitors to Twickenham.

Returning to Cornwall in the early 1950s, Barbara taught at her old school in Truro, later becoming deputy head of PE at Plymstock school for 20 years. A dedicated and kind schoolmistress, with a liking for bright lipstick, she encouraged an interest in grooming among her pupils. Her hockey team travelled to local tournaments in an assortment of cars, including the vintage Rovers known as "Stella" and "Vanessa", the pride and joy of Barbara and Dee.

After retirement from Plymstock in 1972, Barbara moved back to Truro. Dee died in 1990. She regularly attended morning prayers at the Cathedral, where her father had once been a chorister, and she also acted as a guide. Her love of the English language remained to the end. She was delightfully intolerant of sloppy speech, spelling or grammar, and remained a feisty and spirited interlocutor well into her nineties. By 2005, with her sight failing, Barbara finally retired to a nursing home, believed to be in Camborne.



February 1950 : Princess Elizabeth inspects Russell Hill School Girl Guides accompanied by Miss Constance West, Guide Leader and Housemistress.



Headlines in The New York Times - Tuesday 16th April 1912