



ONA magazine

Old Novocastrians Association

Issue 65 > Spring 2004

DEATHS

Peter Derrick Mearns (32-39) died in July 2003.

Eric Neilson Walker (32-41) died 1st December 2003 aged 82.

James Weightman (86-93) died peacefully in the Queen Elizabeth Hospital in August 2003 aged 28 years.

Thomas Geoffrey Wilson (RGS 30-34). Tom was responsible for setting up the original ONA Midlands Branch.

OBITUARY

Harold Peter Tulloh MBBS, DMRD, FRCR, (RGS 1935-1941). (born 31/10/1936) died on 11th June 2003. He was one of four brothers who attended the RGS between 1934 and 1948. He studied at The Medical School, then part of Durham University which he represented at swimming and water polo. The team at that time contained three Tulloh brothers and won The Rochester Cup on numerous occasions, but eventually lost to London University in the UAU Cup Final.

His career then took him to the Ingham Infirmary, South Shields, Derby Royal Infirmary and The Walton Hospital, Liverpool. His last appointment was at The Blackpool and District Hospital. He also lectured at St. Martin's College of Lancaster University where he presented a Trophy for the best student in his speciality.

His own interests included painting and fell-walking in The Lake District. He was also a well-known lay preacher in the area of St. Annes-on-Sea where he had lived for over 30 years.

Frank Oliver Tulloh (1934-1941)

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

ONA Annual General Meeting:
Tuesday, May 11th, 5.15pm
Refreshments will be served.

ONA Annual Dinner:
Friday, October 22nd.

PENRITH the Final Reunion

will be held on Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 10-11-12th September – at Penrith.

The week-end will be centred on both The George and North Lakes Hotels.

There is still room for those who have not yet replied.

Contact Geoff Orde AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, but Geoff has requested that self-booking is essential. Quote "RGS re-union" for preferential rates.

Tours are being arranged on Saturday and Sunday, as well as "Substantial banquets"!

Geoff assures all concerned that Zimmer-parking and every convenience will be at hand!

Write to him ASAP at Forest Mount, Healey, Riding Mill, Northumberland NE44 6BJ Stamped addressed envelope essential, please. Telephone 01434 682233 or e-mail: geoffreyorde@aol.com.

INVITATION

London Old Novocastrians Association's Dinner
Royal Air Force Club, Piccadilly, London SW1
Friday 19 March 2004

Dear Old Novo

I have pleasure in inviting you to the LONA Annual Dinner to be held on Friday 19 March 2004 at the Royal Air Force Club, located at 128 Piccadilly in London, SW1. The night includes:

- a cash bar, open from 6.30pm until 1.00am;
- a three course dinner with wine, commencing at 7.30 pm;
- the LONA AGM, commencing at 7.00pm;

All Old Novos are welcome to the dinner.

The cost of the dinner is £32.50 a head, or £25.50 for those who have left School since September 1998. Dress will be lounge suit. The nearest Tube stations are Green Park and Hyde Park Corner.

If you wish to come to the Dinner please send a cheque payable to "London Old Novocastrians Association" to me at the address below. It should arrive no later than Friday, 12 March 2004. Cheques are not cashed until after the dinner. Please indicate if you wish your name to appear on the School website as an attendee of the dinner, thereby potentially letting old friends know you will be there.

I look forward to seeing you on the 19th.

Kind regards Kulwant Bhatia
(Work/home: 020 7614 6270
0797 1220 664
kulwant.bhatia@kbcfp.com)
124 Glamis Place, London E1W 3EF.

PROMISING INVENTOR AWARD

Dr. Martin A. Walker (71-78), assistant professor of chemistry at SUNY Potsdam, was recently honored with the Promising Inventor Award presented by State University of New York Chancellor Dr. Robert L. King at the second State University Dinner Honoring Innovation, Creation and Discovery. Dr. Walker's entry, "Exochemistry - Performing Chemistry in Space," was one of 22 entries recognized in the Promising Inventor category, while seven SUNY faculty members were presented an Excellence in the Pursuit of Knowledge Award and 25 faculty members were presented a First Patent Award. "Dr. Martin Walker's exemplary work certainly deserves this great honor," said Dr. John A. Fallon III, president of SUNY Potsdam. "His research is helping to bridge the gaps in what we know about performing science, specifically chemistry, in space. Our campus community is very proud of Dr. Walker and his accomplishments."

Martin Walker pictured holding award



Mike Ashburn - (71-78) Beijing, June 10th 2003

Tongxuemen (as they say over here)

All the best for the re-union, I hope it's a good day out. I have been living in Beijing these last five years, although I've been in Asia (Singapore, Jakarta etc) nearly twenty. We got scared away by SARS last month and I got back to Newcastle for just about the longest time since I last saw you all. My younger brother lives in the town (works for NUFC) and showed me around what I understand is now one of the eight "most culturally rich" cities in the world!! It's certainly different to the one I remember, although the demise of lunchtime strip-shows at the Hofbrauhaus is a backward step.

Beijing is pretty amazing too – especially if you're into pouring concrete. Everything is grey, there's a big wall nearby and punk rock has just started, so it's a bit like Newcastle in 1977. Worth a visit though.

As you can see from the picture below I'm married to a Chinese lady. She's called Liu Rong and we have two sons, Robert and Harry. I've been developing infrastructure for most of my time and run a small (OK, very small) electric power company financed by some sceptics. I've enjoyed life out here and those of you who



have been expats in Asia will know what I mean. Water polo gave way to rugby (I was captain of Indonesia at one point, no joke!) but am increasingly trying to convince myself there is some aerobic value in golf.

NOSTALGIA IS WHAT IT OUGHT TO BE

Golden Jubilees seem to be in vogue in recent months. The Coronation. The first conquest of Everest. My first ascent of the huge staircase leading to the Junior School hall. How huge it seemed at the time.

The anniversary seems to have jolted other long hidden and half forgotten memories to the surface. The milk drinking competitions in the morning break. Football in the pinfold (the where?). The mysterious buildings at the South side of the field, later revealed as the woodwork block, the geography block and the rifle range. Major Bertram's "Controller of the Upper Atmosphere" and other similarly ingeniously designated form duties. The grandeur of the Lord Mayor's visit. "Ice cream for seconds today. Everybody to have pudding first". The space where the new changing rooms would be built. Still "new" in 1964; was the "new" ever dropped? And many more dimly recalled memories too fleeting to register.

All providing a happy beginning to a decade of education at the RGS. A time on which I look back with great pleasure and gratitude. Other ON's will doubtless have similar memories and I hope have a similar realisation of the benefit of an RGS education.

Due to Staff shortages and other problems, there has been difficulty getting out the latest issue of ONA Magazine. This mailing is to keep you up to date, but we can promise a bumper edition in the Autumn and your written or pictorial contributions are vital. Amongst the 'problems' was the loss of some material for the Magazine; if you sent in something and kept a copy, it would be appreciated if you could submit it again to the ONA Office as soon as possible. It will be used if space permits.

Stephen Lawson (1953-64)
(President ONA)



PS. Please remember that all ON's are automatically members of the ONA and are not liable to any subscription. So please cancel any outstanding standing orders and use the savings to boost the Appeal.

The Friends of the Royal Grammar School

invite you to a

CABARET EVENING

A showcase for talent

featuring Music, Drama, Songs and Sketches!!

Come along and be thoroughly entertained

During the interval there will be some audience participation!

Something not to miss!

Date: FRIDAY, 5th MARCH, 2004

Time: 7.30 pm – 10.00 pm

Venue: RGS THEATRE

This is a free event – tickets are limited and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis.

Bring your own refreshments!

Nibbles will be provided

Contact ONA Office for further details

The Friends of the Royal Grammar School

invite you to a

QUIZ NIGHT

Date: THURSDAY, 18th MARCH, 2004

Time: 7.30 pm – 9.30 pm

Venue: RGS DINING HALL

Tickets: £1 per person

Prizes!

Come along and form a team on the night, or bring your own team (4-6 people per team)

Children's Round, Music Round

Audio/Visual Round

and Questions for all the family!

Bring your own refreshment!

Contact ONA Office for details

112 RE-UNION

In September 1953 the new intake of 90 boys to the Royal Grammar School included a group of 30 boys who had not only successfully passed the entrance exams during the previous winter, but had also gained scholarships, without which they would not have been there.

During much of the 20th century, there was an enlightened scheme whereby a category of independent schools became 'Direct Grant Grammar Schools'. Boys from local junior schools, who were bright enough to pass the entrance exams, had their fees paid by the state. We made up about one-third of the intake and quickly developed our own sense of identity, helped by the fact that, for whatever reason, we were all put in the same form. The reasons may have been social, academic or more likely, purely arbitrary, but the result was a strong feeling of togetherness within the form and possibly a lingering sense of being slightly different from our more affluent fellow pupils.

F.C. Galbraith (the Gab) christened us 'The Barbarians' and rather in the manner

had we? It could be that there weren't too many other 61 year old males gathering there at the same time, but that would be an unkind thought.

After a tour of the Baltic, where we were impressed more by the building and the views than the contents, we went to the school and had difficulty in dragging ourselves away. The welcome we received was heart-warming and although we were kindly and ably escorted by two 6th formers, we were more than happy to entertain ourselves with tidal waves of reminiscences. We found the new to be most impressive, but it was the old and familiar, which we had come to see and wonderfully everything seemed to be as it once had been. Oddly it didn't even appear smaller which often seems to be the case.

French rooms were still French rooms, Geography rooms remained dedicated to geography. Every room, every corner, every corridor and staircase triggered off 'stream of consciousness' memories. It would be invidious to select any particular memory, but a universal recollection was when one of our number disappeared through the trap-door in the old science lecture theatre. We were disappointed to find that those fittings, at least, had been removed.

The added bonus to our visit was to meet up with

Bill Elliott who had taught us Woodwork, but more importantly for many of us, had been instrumental in infecting us with a love of athletics and cross-country running. Alan Black had already indicated that if there were one member of staff he would like to meet it would be Bill Elliott, when 'mirabile dictu' there he was! He was with a group of youngsters - ONs in their 40s, but kindly joined our party to reminisce about athletics stars from the 1950's.

Reminiscing proved to be thirsty work and we adjourned to the Collingwood for old time's sake. I cannot remember that we used to sit at picnic tables in the sunshine in 1960, nor that some of our number drank white wine in those days, but I could be mistaken.

In the evening we had dinner in a private room at Charlie's in Shakespeare Street. The toast to our departed friends, Colin Good and Dougie Pattison was followed by one to 'The



Alan Black, Arthur Jackson, Malcolm Simpson, Graham Laws, George Everett, Ted Tate, Tony Simpson.

School of the North' It would be fair to say that good fellowship reigned, assisted by champagne provided by Graham Laws, who had become a grandfather on the same day.

After dinner we adjourned to the Quayside. Tony Simpson, who lives in Manhattan, reckoned that New York has nothing to compare with Newcastle's nightlife. Arthur Jackson felt it compared favourably with Tokyo's entertainment district. I can only say that it's a bit different to Cumbria.

The day? finished with nightcap(s) on the 5th floor balcony of the Copthorne Hotel overlooking the Tyne and the floodlit bridges. Magical!

Impressions are still whirling around, but I know we would all agree that we were a special group of people, who were thrilled to find that 40 odd years disappeared in the twinkling of an eye, as we revelled in the pleasure of one another's company once again.

After all, we had been the best form, in the best school, in the finest city in the world.

We hope to repeat the experience and attract even more barbarians in 2007, when most of us will become (very young) OAPs.

Our collective thanks to all at the school who made us feel as though we were back home, which indeed we were.

For any other ONs who are interested in organising something similar, a helpful starting point is the 'friends re-united' website. We now have details of more than two-thirds of the surviving barbarians.

David Kemp 1953-60



Arthur Jackson, George Everett, Roger Darsley, Tony Simpson, Ted Tate, David Kemp, Malcolm Simpson, Alan Black, David James, Graham Laws, David Gray.

"IF ANOTHER CAP FITS"

This cap is believed to be an RGS First XV Colours cap. It was awarded to Bobby Stafford ON, who was President of Old Novocastrians RFC in 1959-61 and later Club Patron. It was presented to the Club in his memory. I cannot remember caps being awarded for School sporting colours (except perhaps for cricket). When was the practice of awarding caps discontinued?

Stephen Lawson (1953-64)



WALKING WITH FRIENDS

Spring Walk -

Saturday, 27th March, 2004

Join us at the Roman Wall

The complete walk is approximately 11 miles and will take about 6 hours

We start the trail at the famous Roman Fort of Housesteads and walk in a westerly direction, passing Crag Lough and a number of spectacular crags. For a number of miles we follow the route of the Pennine Way, passing Aesica Roman Fort, a number of milecastles, Walltown, a Roman Army Museum, Thirlwell Castle and finish at Greenhead.

The coach will leave RGS at 8.30 am prompt on Saturday, 27th March, 2004. The charge is £7.00 for adults and £4.00 for children. To reserve your seats please fill in the coupon below and return it to RGS by Monday, 15th March, 2004. For more information please contact Mr. Dave Smith on 0191 281 5711 or email friends@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

Please note that because we have to pay a deposit when booking the coach, the charge is non-refundable. Contact ONA office for further details. Telephone (0191) 212 8924 or 281 5711.

ANNUAL DINNER OCTOBER 2003



Ray Eden (32-36) (standing) and Dinner Pals.



Guest Speaker Timothy Kirkhope, M.E.P. (53-62), Marie hagan, Deputy Head Prefect, John Armstrong.

NEIL BAGE, RGS - 1972-1982

23rd December, 2003

Mr. James Miller, The Headmaster,
Royal Grammar School,
Eskdale Terrace, Newcastle upon Tyne NE2 4DX

Dear Mr. Miller

I thought I should write to you to tell you the sad news that Neil died on 7th December at Kingston Hospital. He was 39 years old and had lived with Multiple Sclerosis for many years, the last 10 of which he spent as a resident at the Royal Hospital of Neuro-Disability in Putney.

I met Neil 6 1/2 years ago when I was doing voluntary work in the Hospital and fell in love with him almost right away. Indeed, when he first asked my name, quick as a flash he replied "God-given Gaile" - People don't normally respond like that when I say

my name and from then on, he totally charmed me. We got engaged, but did not get married - circumstances together with the stress of Neil's illness (not to mention his flirting) precluded this. Neil was so positive and resilient under many truly awful circumstances (for instance, for three years, the ever-gregarious and sociable Neil could not speak). Whatever happened, however, he always said he was "fine".

I know that relatively speaking quite a large proportion of his life before he got MS was spent at the RGS and from what he told me he was very happy at your school. I am personally very glad that he was in your hands prior to his illness and gave him valuable days of carefree life.

Yours faithfully
Gaile Louise Weir