

O·N·A

OLD NOVOCASTRIANS ASSOCIATION MAGAZINE



Issue 73 | Spring 2008



Smokers' Union: The Great Escape

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A Lot of Bad Hair

A Career in the Empire

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Contribute!

We are always looking for articles and news from Old Novos to include in the magazine, so send your contributions, via email (if possible) to: ona@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk or to the ONA Office at the school.

Please include relevant pictures if possible. They will be returned as soon as the magazine has been printed.

The deadline for acceptance of copy for the Autumn 2008 issue is: Monday 11 August 2008. Copy may be carried over to a future issue.

ONA Magazine
Issue 73 | Spring 2008

ONA magazine is the magazine for the Old Novocastrian Association

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The Editor reserves the right to edit, alter or omit all submissions to the magazine. Copy may be carried over to the next edition. The Editor's decision is final.

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Welcome to the latest edition of our magazine

You will find enclosed in this mailing the Arts Diary for the Summer term. I am sure you will appreciate the vast array of events taking place which give a huge opportunity for current pupils, staff and even external organisations to demonstrate their talents. There really is something for everybody and for those who live in the area I would encourage you to come and see for yourselves the high standard of music, drama and the arts currently being performed.

This term sees the departure, after around 20 years of service, of the School doctor and nurse. Many of our younger members will have passed through the hands, so to speak, of Dr Michael Borthwick and Gillian Mather. Dr Borthwick of course is a former pupil himself (60-67) and will be known to some of you as a contemporary. The Association wish them both well and offer their thanks (if that is the right word for the BCG injection!) for their service over the years.

There is of course another significant departure at the end of this term in that we see the retirement of the current Headmaster, James Miller, after 14 years in the post. On behalf of the Association I once again offer our thanks and best wishes to him in his retirement.

The School has recently held the Leavers lunch inviting back former pupils who left the School in 2004 and 2005. The event once again proved extremely popular with over 120 members attending. If you are one of those recent leavers then please ensure that the Association has current contact details for you so that we can keep in touch. We always want to hear your news as well as keep you up to date with developments, reunions and events.

That leads me to my final comment which is simply the request for news, stories, pictures and information for our future editions. Please keep your contributions coming!



R.P.V. Etherington

Rod Etherington (80–90)
President

News and Events

Retirements

Farewell to: **Dr Mike Borthwick (60-67)**, RGS' school doctor for 22 years, who retired in April. Also newly retired is RGS' first ever school nurse; Gillian Mather. Gillian has spent 17 years tending to sick RGS pupils. Mike and Gillian are replaced by Doctor Catherine Dias and Nurse Rachel Williams.

Gillan Mather and Mike Borthwick with Headmaster James Miller.



After 14 years at RGS, English teacher and Head of Year 11, Jean Ross, is retiring.

Although Jean will be helping her husband with his consultancy business, she'll be spending most of her time playing golf at her club, Northumberland Park. Jean says she's been privileged working with highly intelligent staff and pupil; she will miss RGS enormously.

Jean Ross



1983 Leavers Reunion

Saturday 14 June 2008

If you haven't yet signed up for the reunion, make sure you do before the deadline: Tuesday 6 May. Contact the ONA office for more information.

London Old Novocastrians Association Annual Dinner

At the RAF Club, 29 February 2008



Family History Research – can you help?

Tom and Christine Rae are researching their family history, and would like to hear from anyone who knew, or have heard of John Robson Bell. He attended RGS from 1926 to 1931. He died in action over Baeri, Germany on 20 November 1944, and is buried in Reichswald Forest War Cemetery. If you have any information, please contact the ONA office.

Rugby

In rugby, the 1st VII won the Caritas Rugby Sevens. They beat Dundee High School in the final by 5 tries to 3. The U14 Squad won the County Sevens, winning all seven games. The closest score was a 33-5 win over Dame Allan's. Meanwhile, the U14 and the U13 teams finished their seasons by winning their County Cups, 45-0 and 53-0 respectively. There are further competitions still undecided.

Commiserations to the 1st XV team rugby team, who was beaten by Wellington College in the quarter final of the Daily Mail Cup.

Netball

The U13 netball team has had a very successful term, winning the Tyne & Wear Schools' Tournament; they remained unbeaten in all matches. They also won the Tyne & Wear Knock Out competition by beating Central High 20 – 7 in the final. Well done girls!

Degree Results

Martin Brett (99-04)

BA (Hons) Politics and Economics, Newcastle University

Philip Andrew Dowson (97-02)

MB BS (Hons) Medicine and Surgery, Newcastle University

Jonathan Arun

Harikrishnan (95-02) MB BS Medicine and Surgery, Newcastle University

Richard Andrew Hopper (97-04)

BA (Hons) Marketing and Management, Newcastle University

Philip James (94-01)

BA (Hons) Fine Art, Newcastle University

Ben Simpson (96-03)

BA (Hons) Business Management, Newcastle University

Abraham Thomas (95-02)

BA (Hons) Fine Art, Newcastle University

James Ward (96-03)

BSc (Hons) Zoology, Newcastle University

Christopher James Watt (94-04)

BA (Hons) Business Management, Newcastle University



RGS Art Department Private View

Friday 16 May 4.15 – 6.30pm

All ONs, their families and friends are welcome to attend the annual RGS Art Preview. Art work from GCSE, AS and A2 students will be on display in the Art Department, STC and Dining Hall. Refreshments will be served. Entry is free – just turn up!

RGS Cricket Festival

This summer RGS will be hosting the Annual RGS Cricket Festival. Starting on Monday 7 July, the week-long annual competition features Royal Grammar Schools across the country.

Last year, for the first time ever, the School won the festival, and is this year looking to retain the title. If you would like to come along and support the School, contact the ONA office for a match programme.

Congratulations!

Congratulations to the team of RGS sixth form students on winning the North East Independent Schools' Mock Trial Competition.



Who? What? Where?

The ONA would like to congratulate our President, **Rod Etherington (80-90)**, on his recent marriage to the lovely Jacqueline.

George William Beavis (60-67) is a retired BA captain, but is still flying light singles.

Nicholas Miller (80-87) has moved from Ford, and is now working for Aston Martin.

Jerard Knott (92-94) is a solicitor.

David Christensen (68-75) is currently in New Zealand, working for IBM.

Neil Aitkenhead (45-55): after graduating from Durham University in 1959 I spent six years with the British Antarctic Survey including a two year spell in the Antarctic, and being awarded a PhD and Polar Medal for my work. The remainder of my career was spent as a geologist with the British Geological Survey. I retired in 1996.

Brian Airey (51-62): I spent most of my life as an Optometrist in the family practice in Sunderland. I retired in 2001 due to ill-health. I am now enjoying life, (although health is still a problem) with my wife Kath whom I married in 2005. We are now living in South West France: Rugby, Red Wine and Confit. I would be pleased to hear from any of the group and can be contacted by email: brian.airey@orange.fr

Matthew Chaganis (00-07) is having a gap year sailing, as a result of which he has decided to ditch his forthcoming Landscape Architecture and Planning degree course at Sheffield University to join the Merchant Navy instead.

Tim Livsey (90-97) will soon be taking up his new post as History teacher at Highgate School, where he will be working with **Richard Miller (94-99)**, who is teaching History and Politics.

David Alan Thornton (81-88) is a Director of Youth and Children's Ministry at Christ Church in Winchester. He is married and has two children.

Andrew Fitton (64-75) is the new chairman and owner of Swindon Town Football Club.

Simon Taylor (75-82) I was in Junior School and did my O-Levels in Senior School before moving to America. After living in New York City and the Hamptons from 1988 to 2002, I moved to Santa Barbara, California, a stunning, beautiful town two hours north of Los Angeles, where it's warm and sunny most of the time. I'm now married, with a daughter, Kay, who was born just over a year ago.

Geoff Towers (73-78): I have returned North after 20 odd years in the South but has somewhat overshot and landed rather further North (Scotland) than ideal so that now I am a boy from the South round these parts. I also find myself rather conflicted as two of my sons are now at Merchiston School in Edinburgh and they play rugby against RGS a couple of times a year. Who do I support? With their older brother at Newcastle University, the ties to Newcastle remain strong.

Thomas Holloway (95-05) upon completing his degree in Geography in June, Thomas will be going to Afghanistan with the Army as a member of the Royal Artillery. He is planning on doing a law conversion when he returns.

Kristian Haagensen (95-02) After many phone calls from friends telling me a photo of me has appeared in the last ON magazine I thought I better drop you a line to let you know what I am now doing. I am the boy in the plain white t-shirt wearing spectacles in the top photo on page 15. I must also add that the photo is from GCSE results day not A-Level. Otherwise I must have been a very young looking 18yr old!

I studied 'Design for Industry' at Northumbria University gaining a first class with honours last July. I am now a young British Army Officer having just passed out of Sandhurst as a Junior Under Officer last December. I am currently with the Royal Engineers undergoing some arduous Commando training based in Devon which will be my home for the next few months. Depending on operation rotation, Afghanistan looks likely early 2009. I managed to celebrate my Officer Commissioning at Sandhurst with

Ramsay Pearson (44-51) writes: with reference to the photograph of the Upper Sixth Medicals 1951: About ten of us from that year did medicine and dentistry at Newcastle Medical and Dental Schools, then part of Durham University. **Michael McKendrick (44-51)** and I joined the Royal Navy on Short Service commissions rather than take pot luck with National Service. He left after three years whereas I stayed on to become a consultant in Underwater Medicine dealing exclusively with diving and submarines. It was a most interesting and enjoyable career and I did indeed "see the world" as promised! I ended up doing three years as an Exchange Officer with the United States Navy working at their Naval Medical Research Institute in Bethesda, Maryland. This enabled my wife and I to see a great deal of America and, overall, it was a great experience. After retiring from the Royal Navy, I worked for another twelve years as a part-time consultant in Occupational Medicine before retiring completely two years ago.

Tom Stirling (92-99), is working for Richmondshire District Council as their Director of Communications.

Mike Luke (74-84) is a project engineer for United Utilities.

The Conquerers, a short film shot at the RGS, recently won the North East and Border Royal Television Society's Best drama award. The film was commissioned by the Amazing Group, whose Chief Executive is **Paul Campbell (70-77)**. To see the film (and RGS) go to: www.theconquerers-movie.com

many ex-RGS pupils. Unfortunately I haven't a picture with them all on but have included a photo with a handful. Those ON's who were there include; Kinloch Magowan, Ollie Currie, Will Turner, Mark Wallace, Phil Creed, Will Howe, Vivek Jassal, Sarah Campion, Katia Stewart...and my dad, Bruce Haagensen.



Smokers' Union: The Great Escape

Derek Williams (39-48)

Further to the Smokers' Union photo in the previous issue, I claim to have been its co-founder, along with other 5th Formers of my year: Jimmy Hampton, Alfie Fredale, Keith Taylor and Don Gibbin. The photo features none of these, which is why I suggest that it was later: 1948 or 1949.

In those days of Sartre and Camus, Frenchmen maintained that their best ideas came from smoke-filled rooms. We could hardly match such claims: after lunch we would meet in the Brandling Village where we would talk, smoke and saunter. None the less we regarded our Smokers' Union as a kind of school society, with the added thrill of an underground resistance movement.

Surprisingly those lunchtime gatherings were neither furtive nor fugitive. Confidence grew from the fact that no member of staff had ever been seen in our backwater, at least during the midday hours. After all, was not this the prime time for cigarettes in the masters' common room? Such then was our meeting place, convenient yet discreet, two minutes from school, yet undetected and undisturbed, save on one never-to-be-forgotten, near disastrous day.

No one knows what prompted the Headmaster to take a short cut through Brandling Village at 1.30pm on a spring afternoon in 1947. It was entirely without precedent. He had, as was well known, a radar for trouble, fine-tuned in the environs of Penrith, plus the complementary gift of abrupt appearance at psychological moments. We smokers, possibly fifteen in number, chatting and chortling in our usual blue haze, chanced to be grouped outside the Collingwood Arms when we were electrified by frantic whispers: "It's the Beak! Ebb, EBB, RUN!"

He had already seen us and was closing fast. Our end was nigh. Fortunately his eyesight was not up to identifying individuals at that distance, but the range was narrowing. Forty years and ten seconds between the Smokers' Union and its termination, to say nothing of the termination of our school careers. There was only one option: spinning round, we crashed through the pub's entrance, hurled ourselves across the lobby and piled in to the Gents. As the toilet door swung behind me I glimpsed the Headmaster, storming into the lobby but then, in error, turning left into the public room. "Where are they?" he thundered, "I know they are here!" A flash of hope crossed my mind. Can it be that he thinks we have taken refuge in the bar and that the barman is hiding us? A shouting match between furious the Headmaster and the bewildered publican confirmed our salvation, allowing precious time to squeeze, one by one, through an agonizingly narrow toilet window, crash onto concrete, pick ourselves up and run like hell.



Smokers' Union outside the Collingwood Arms

It would not be until the early 1960s that medical opinion hardened convincingly against smoking. Previously it had been said merely to stunt growth and shorten wind. Ian Prentice, prominent in the photo and probably the school's tallest boy, seems to belie such theories.

Furthermore our membership included some of RGS's finest sportsmen. Far from demonstrating degeneracy, the Great Escape illustrated unparalleled swiftness of response and convincing gymnastic ability; through this is not of course to say that in the light of subsequent knowledge we were other than misguided.

I smoked my last cigarette in 1962, which may be why I'm still around. Tragically I know of at least three Union members whose lives were shortened by their longer dedication to the duplicitous weed. Today, when smokers are hounded and tobacco reviled, our late Headmaster's beliefs prevail. I salute his memory and pray that the Smokers' Union meets no more.



A Lot of Bad Hair

Prefects 1976

by Nigel Paton (66-76)

On clearing out some old files recently I came across this less than completely flattering photograph of the prefects 75-76. Publishing it in the ONA magazine should at the very least cause some embarrassment to some otherwise respectable 50 year olds. To my surprise, I can put names to almost all of the faces, or at least I think I can:



Anyone for a haircut?

Back Row, left to right:

Ian Laidlaw, Martin Tait, Pete Milburn: Pete works in training in the Bath area, remains in close touch with Mark Surtees (66-76), and John Guthrie: John is a long term government solicitor, now with the Food Standards agency in London. He has less hair these days.

Hale?, Robin Clark, Matthew Friend: as wicket keeper for the second XI, at an away match at Barnard Castle he invented sledging long before the Aussies.

John Irving: John was once berated by the man who became Cardinal Basil Hume for heckling from the pavilion at Ampleforth – against the Seconds I seem to recall. Mind, you never got anything at Ampleforth; the reason John was incensed was because he'd been given out LBW from a wide. He and I subsequently shared offices as legal trainees, both articulated to Old Novo J.D. Jeffrey. John is now a professor in law.

Me, Nigel Paton: corporate lawyer, just about to leave ICI after more than 20 years. Rees ?, Andy Skilbeck, Jamie Atkinson: there were two Atkinsons in this year, JJ and Muddy. This is JJ.

Middle Row, left to right:

Mike Harle: long career with Shell, last I heard. Michael Bearn, Neil Griffiths: I understand Neil is a solicitor in London, information received fourth hand and through complete coincidence so quite possibly incorrect, but I won't let that stop me. Mike Shanks, Not known: Apologies to whoever you are. Just can't get the name. John Stephenson, Martin (?) Waugh: there were two Waugh brothers. I think this one is Martin. Hope so, because I can't remember the name of the other one. Martin Montgomery, Tom Mohan: along with myself, (oh how smug), the only survivors at the end of Gerry Keating's A level politics set. Everybody else had been thrown out for sundry offences ranging from failure to hand in homework to being overly argumentative. There are lots of Gerry stories, mostly libellous. Graeme Twaddle: my best man, now an investment director with UBS in Newcastle. He is almost unchanged in appearance from the photo. Remains in close touch with Nick Chadwin. Mick Smart.

Front Row, left to right:

Nick Pinkney, Chris Gray: In addition to Atkinsons and Waughs there were also two Chris Grays this year. This one was a good cricketer. I think he may have gone into the Church. Nick Chadwin: there may have been sundry Atkinsons, Waughs and Grays, but there was only one Chad. Actor and theatre producer, based in Sheffield. Mike Catchpole, Mike Wood: Head boy, and reliably understood to have enjoyed a romantic liaison with a dinner lady. Respect! (No, not Mrs Teunon, before you ask). Jimmy O'Hare: Jim trained as an accountant, but I think he gave it up to teach. He had the longest run up for the slowest deliveries in schoolboy cricket. Huw Thomas, Andrew Matthews, Dave Lumsden.

In those days the Prefects room was in room 6, middle of the ground floor in the Hall, in the background here. My recollection is that the photo was taken in spring 1976. Oxford bags and platform shoes were in, Central High still wore brown uniforms, socialism versus capitalism was still a live debate and nobody had heard of punk. However, some things are still very familiar. That spring, Newcastle United lost the League Cup final to Manchester City. Denis Tueart overhead kick for City's second, as I recall.

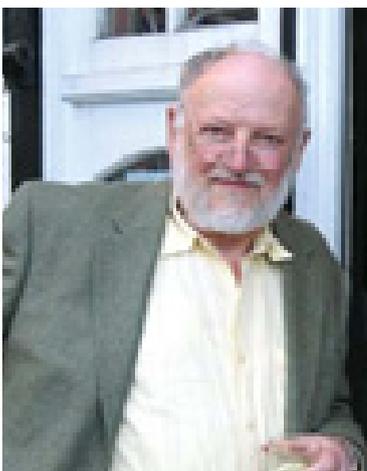
There are a couple of things in the photo that will strike the more recent ONs – no girls, of course, and absolutely no ethnic representation. That was not bias on the part of the School, but reflective of the overall make up of the School population at the time. Unthinkable now, thank goodness. Indeed, I think the School as a whole has moved on and improved in the intervening thirty years (my son is currently a pupil); notwithstanding the loss of direct grant status and changes in curricula. I'm pleased there are girls at the RGS, I'm pleased the ridiculously anachronistic school song was ditched and I'm delighted the bursary campaign has been such a success. However, dulce et decorum est was nonsense as a motto in 1976, and it's ludicrous now for a school that is otherwise a more liberal, more global, albeit perhaps less eccentric, place than it was back then.

A Career in the Empire

I was always surprised by how much nicer my teachers were when talking about me to my parents on Parents' Day than when they had me on my own. Normally they used such terms as bonehead, idler, and time-waster. Selling matches outside the Odeon was what my Latin teacher prophesied. One could hardly blame him. In Latin, as in algebra and a number of other subjects, I had simply given up, having never learned, or long since forgotten, the first principles. By Howard Temperley (41-51).

I had got into Newcastle Royal Grammar School the easy way, which is to say through its Junior School. In my case it had been even easier than usual on account its being wartime and the School's having been evacuated to the Lake District. There, living in a hostel halfway between Penrith and Lake Ullswater, I had been allowed pretty much to run wild becoming a sort of bush boy, tough as whipcord and more interested in catching rabbits than school work. So I'd never learned my Latin irregular verbs, or my arithmetical tables.

Howard Temperley (41-51)



It was an experience that, not surprisingly, caused problems when it came to my settling down to post-war life in the urban North East. Now I yearned for the freedom of the Lakes as much as when I was first evacuated I had yearned for home. School reports spoke of my appearing preoccupied; mostly I was just bored. Instead of walking to school through woods and meadows I found myself hanging about on station platforms among crates of fish and stacks of mail bags. My being good at sport helped make up for the dreariness of daily commuting. All the same, my father was plainly worried by my lack of academic progress, the more so as his colleagues at the bank had taken to boasting about their children going on to colleges and universities, that apparently being the new fashion. In my case anything of the sort appeared an unlikely prospect.

This was also the view of my teachers. Even on Parents' Day there was no disguising the fact that I was an academic laggard. Nothing wrong with that; the school catered for all sorts. It simply happened that I was an outdoors sort of lad, and so ought to be looking for something in that line by way of a career. But what? If only, like some of my classmates, my parents had been farmers the problem would have been solved. It was Larry Watson, my housemaster, who came up with the traditional solution: namely, if there weren't jobs in Britain for lads like me, why not try the Empire?

Ah, the Empire! Out there, across the sea, there was a world of adventure and excitement, of steaming jungles and exotic animals. My first ever earnings, gained as a nine-year-old evacuee picking potatoes in the Lake District, I had blown on a book called

Mauled by a Tiger. In Penrith's Alhambra I had sat through two entire showings of Kipling's *The Jungle Book*, which had led me to picture myself one day turning up at School with a scar or limp and casually observing "He was a big chap that tiger. Came at me out of the bamboo. Had to finish him off with my knife." In time I had graduated from Kipling to such works as Colonel J H Patterson's *The Man Eaters of Tsavo*, Jim Corbett's *The Man Eaters of Kumayon*, and Frank Buck's *Bring 'Em Back Alive*. So at the age of 14 nothing appealed to me more than the idea of pig-sticking and tiger-shooting. Catching rabbits in the Lake District was all very well, for real bushwhacking one had to go abroad, and where better than somewhere in the Empire? What else, after all, was the Empire for?

So it was with such ideas in mind that, accompanied by my father, I made a trip to the Sunderland Labour Exchange, an unlikely place from which to launch a career of derring-do. Nevertheless, the man behind the desk managed to fish out a Department of Labour pamphlet entitled *Careers for Young Men Overseas*. Back home we pored over its pages.

There were, it transpired, any number of careers for colonial administrators, foresters, veterinary officers and agricultural scientists, all of which appealed to me, the problem being that in every case save one they required degrees or diplomas of some kind or other. The single exception was rubber planting in Malaya, the only requirement for which was to be "a young man of character and determination." That sounded like me.

It also turned out to be a career about which, surprisingly, my mother was well informed. Like my father she had worked in a

“Are there any tigers on your plantation?”

bank, which was, indeed, how they had first met. Prior to that, however, she had been courted by one of the bank’s customers, a rubber planter home on leave and anxious to acquire a wife to take back with him to Malaya. Why she had declined his offer I was not told, but it was just as well for news had lately reached us that he had died in a Japanese prison camp. Nevertheless, she produced photographs showing a handsome white-suited figure lounging on the veranda of a smart looking bungalow or standing in front of rows of grinning native servants, all of which led me to wonder why on earth she had married Father.

Rubber planters returning home on leave still called in at the bank. It was no great surprise, therefore, when, shortly after our trip to the labour exchange, Father announced that he had invited one over for a chat. What was more surprising was his bringing home a bottle of whisky in preparation for the visit, suggesting that he was rather worldlier in his approach to such matters than I had supposed. Although not T-total, ours was an abstemious household, our annual liquor consumption seldom extending to much more than a bottle of port at Christmas. Either Father knew a thing or two about rubber planters or he had made a shrewd assessment of the character of this particular one, a heavy breathing, elephantine figure who arrived by taxi and duly lumbered into our living room.

Judging by the loose way his clothes hung about him he had at one time been even fatter than he now was. Seated precariously on one of our dining room chairs he gratefully accepted my father’s offer of a whisky, and did not demur when a top-up was proposed. There followed a lengthy discussion as to the



virtues of different brands of whisky, the prices at which they could be purchased in Malaya (astonishingly low), and the iniquity of the taxes which Labour was loading onto the British public (extortionately high), which made him wonder whether he would come back to England on his next leave. And who would be the loser? The Attlee Government. It was cutting its own throat.

Having got this off his chest and again assured my father that he was a man of unusual discrimination so far as whisky was concerned, meanwhile gratefully accepting a third top-up, he turned his attention to me. What was it that interested me in a career as a rubber planter?

“Are there,” I asked, “any tigers on your plantation?”

This took him aback. Tigers, it emerged, did not feature in the day-to-day affairs of his particular plantation, although some of his “boys” had once claimed to have seen one down by the creek. This was disappointing. I could see that he was not the sort who would relish spending a night up a tree with a goat tethered underneath and a flashlight attached to his rifle. But what about other rubber planters? In response to further questions, he said that although there were wild pigs he personally had never gone in for pig-sticking, nor, so far as he was aware, had anyone else in Malaya. He didn’t go in for duck

or pheasant shooting either. In fact, wildlife didn’t appear to feature at all in his scheme of things or in that of rubber planters generally. Finally, leaning forward and fixing me with his slightly bloodshot eyes, he said, “The important thing for young lads like you is - keep off the native women.”

I was astonished. Here was a side to life in the tropics never mentioned by Colonel J H Patterson, Jim Corbett or the authors of any of the other big-game-hunting books I’d read. Nor could I recall Biggles having encountered temptations of that sort, or any of John Buchan’s characters either. In fact it struck me as being totally at odds with the legends of exploration and endurance, bugles and cavalry charges that I had come to associate with the Empire. All the same, it added a whole new dimension to my concept of life in the tropics.

Soon afterwards I fell in with a new set of friends, in consequence of which my academic performance took an unexpected turn for the better, earning me scholarships, first to Oxford and subsequently to Yale. So how rubber trees were tapped, who did the tapping, what happened to the sap after it was brought back from the forest and how and where it was turned into useable rubber remained aspects of planting about which I had failed to ask and was destined never to learn.

I often thought about those “native women,” though.

From the Archives

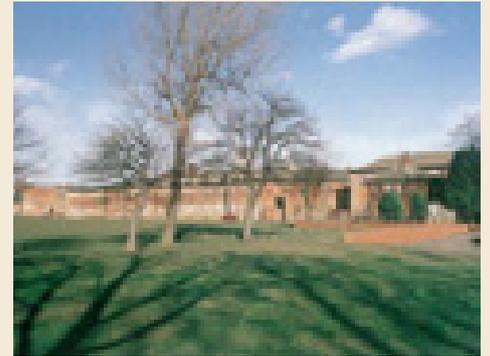
CCF – Band practice at Camp, 1949

Left to right: **David Allcock (39-50)**, ? **Hammond**, **Jack Pace (40-51)**, **John Baty (43-49)**, **Jim Coulson (42-49)**. (picture sent in by David Allcock).



RGS February 1995

Picture taken from where the Sports Hall now stands.



RGS Sports Day 1984

Picture taken by **Nicholas Posner (78-85)**, who says he has no idea who any of the boys are. Do you recognise any of them?



Allenheads Relief Expedition March 1947



Obituaries

Rev. Peter W. Grey (65-72)

Born 26 November 1953, died 15 January 2008, aged 54 years old.

David C. Grey (70-75) writes to tell us of the sudden and untimely death of his brother Peter, following a cerebral haemorrhage. He was 54.

Always a keen amateur musician, Peter played cello in the school orchestra and continued to play guitar and occasionally piano for pleasure.

He left the RGS in 1972 after completing his A- levels to pursue a career with the Midland Bank (now HSBC). He worked in the foreign exchange department using his talent for economics and modern languages on a daily basis, but his career was somewhat curtailed by the onset of epilepsy in 1983. Although the condition was eventually brought under control with medication, the stresses of the financial world encouraged him to seek an alternative career.

A lifelong Christian (and active member of the Christian Union under John Rowling) Peter eventually followed his calling in 1989 and, with the support of his young family, left the bank to study at Manchester University with the ambition to become a minister in the United Reformed Church.

He graduated in 1993 and was ordained to serve, first as minister for Christ Church URC in Stanley, Co. Durham, then in 2000 moved west to take responsibility for the twin churches of Cleveleys and Fleetwood near Blackpool.

A genuinely kind and caring person, he took to his new role, becoming a popular, respected and well loved clergyman. After a private family cremation, over 400 people, including his congregations, friends, colleagues and fellow clergy attended the thanksgiving service at his church in Cleveleys in January. The service ended with a fine rendition of Vidor's Toccata of which even Jack Wolstenholme would have been proud.

At the request of many friends who had been unable to attend the funeral in Cleveleys, our parents held a second memorial service at St Columba's URC in Peter's home town of North Shields on Saturday 1 March.

Peter was a firm believer in the benefits of recycling and the family has since learned from the Manchester transplant co-ordinator's office that his wish to donate his organs has resulted in a chance of life for at least three other people.

A fine son and brother, devoted husband and father, Peter leaves his wife, Allison, two children Andrew (27), Catherine (25) and a grandson John (4).

Rev. Peter W. Grey



Tony Kysh (51-60)

Born 29 September 1943, died 20 January 2008.

Tony Kysh has died at the early age of 64. Always looking much younger than his years, Tony exemplified enthusiasm and inspired all who worked with him during his long career in television.

At school he excelled in swimming and diving and he captained the Swimming Team at an early age. In 1960, he won a scholarship through the English Speaking Union to the Woodberry Forest School in Virginia, USA, where he spent the rest of the year. It was the essence of 'cool' and when he returned, he sported a strong American accent which lasted for at least two weeks! Tony regaled us with stories of his great adventure which included seeing the great Ray Charles in Atlanta. Whether it was as a result of this odyssey or not, Tony was inspired to join the fledgling Tyne Tees Television as a researcher in 1961. It was the beginning of a brilliant career in direction and production and whilst the list of his achievements is long and impressive, it was the unseen work which he carried out in passing his skills on to the young and sometimes less fortunate, which reflects so much credit on his memory. Some of his last work was at Durham Prison, where he enthusiastically worked with prisoners on a documentary. Earlier, of course, there was Supergran, Byker Grove and the Famous Five and much more.

Always living on Tyneside, Tony married Angel in 1966 and was devoted to his wife and two daughters Anya and Gemma. The essence of modesty, he refused to allow the limelight to shine upon him and would rather deflect credit on others who might have felt less worthy. He was dedicated to passing his comprehensive skills on to the next generation and his warm and generous nature was something his family, friends and colleagues will for ever remember.

David Goldwater (51-62)

Obituaries

Harry Dowson (50-57)

The sudden death of Harry Dowson on 28 January 2008 has left a large gap in the lives of his friends and colleagues. You could easily make a big mistake about Harry. If you simply saw him wandering down the street you could conclude he was nobody special. It took time to appreciate his intelligence, integrity and quietly understated kindness.

Henry Richard Dowson – to give him his full name – was born in Newcastle upon Tyne on 2 March 1939. His father was the head gardener of Newcastle's hospitals. Harry benefited from an education system that was working well. His primary school quickly recognised his exceptional ability and enabled him to obtain a scholarship to the Royal Grammar School. The grammar school developed his mathematics and also gave him a rounded education, instilling in him a love of history and literature. From school he went to what is now the University of Newcastle but was then King's College of the University of Durham. He obtained a first class honours BSc in mathematics and embarked on a PhD at Newcastle in functional analysis. However, after a year, his supervisor John Ringrose moved to Cambridge. Harry moved with him and spent two years at St John's College before graduating with a Cambridge PhD. He

greatly loved his time at St John's, just as he had loved his time at the Royal Grammar School, and kept in touch with both institutions, regularly attending reunion dinners.

His first appointment was at University College of Swansea. After two years there he spent a year lecturing at Newcastle, followed by two years at the University of Illinois, a spell in America being considered a very good way of developing your own mathematics research. He then moved to a lectureship at the University of Glasgow. On arrival in Glasgow he made the first of many shrewd financial moves: instead of moving his money from America straight to Britain he kept it offshore for a year, thereby avoiding a large amount of tax.

Glasgow University was to be his base for the rest of his life. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer in 1973 and to Reader in 1975. He took very early retirement at age 51, tiring of teaching and examining large numbers of students, but he remained a member of the Mathematics Department, active in his own personal research, encouraging and supporting other researchers and editing the Glasgow Mathematical Journal. He was the author of 26 research papers and the definitive



Photo taken by Simon Wasserman (57-66)

textbook in his area of research, and was elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1978.

He lived very modestly. His few indulgences in life were his collections of books, stamps and coins, a good malt whisky – and looking after his money. He took an active part in the social life of his local church and was particularly generous in welcoming and sharing his knowledge with newly arrived students from overseas. His many friends will miss him.

Neil Dickson

John G Mole (36-44)

born 1926, died 23 November 2007, aged 81.

John Mole suddenly passed away on 23 November 2007, leaving wife Betty, children Peter and Pamela and four grandchildren. John saw war service in Hong Kong as a member of the Royal Marine 44 Commando. He had a life long career and interest in education, ending his teaching career as Remedial Advisor for Dorset Education Authority in the late 1980s. Other interests and hobbies included studying the works of Dr Johnson and walking in the Lake District, often following the Wainwright routes.

Allan Powell (51-58)

Broadcaster and family man Allan Powell loses battle with cancer

Friends and family are mourning the death of broadcaster and family man Allan Powell, one of Yarm's best known residents. Allan, 68, died peacefully in his sleep on Tuesday, February 19, at Butterwick Hospice. He had been suffering from cancer.

Born 2nd January 1940 in North Cheam, Surrey. He was educated at The Royal Grammar School in Newcastle.

He began his career in journalism at The Blyth News, The Whitley Bay Guardian and The Shields Gazette before moving into television, joining Tyne Tees in 1965. There then followed three years at Border Television as Head of News and Current Affairs and he then joined Yorkshire Television as a producer on the magazine programme, Calendar.

Allan moved to Tyne Tees in 1973 where he was Head of News and Current Affairs. He then joined the BBC in 1977 as a staff reporter/producer. In 1983, he then became Look North's Teesside/North Yorkshire correspondent, a post he held for 20 years. Career highlights included coverage of the

miners' strike in the 1980s, the 50th anniversary of the D-Day landings in Normandy, and a trip to Canada in 2003 to observe Military Training ahead of the war in Iraq.

He received the Royal Television Society Award for 'North East Reporter of the Year' in 1993 and in 1997 was honoured again by the RTS for 'Outstanding Contribution to Journalism'.

His family said "Allan was a wonderful husband, father and grandfather who was greatly loved by all who knew him – he was a fabulous storyteller with a wonderful sense of humour who lived life to the full. We were all so proud of him and will miss him greatly."

Allan leaves his wife, Maureen, mother, Renee, daughters Abigail, Emma and Victoria, son, Adam and granddaughters Olivia, Lucy, Georgina, Holly and Freya.

*Obituary published courtesy of
www.gazettelive.co.uk*

Norman Hogg (28-33)

Norman Hogg passed away peacefully on 27 August, 2007 aged 91 years. After his schooling, Norman moved into Quantity Surveying where he enjoyed a successful career ending with a firm not more than five minutes walk from the RGS. He had a short stint in the Army based in Cairo during WWII. He was an avid painter and keen gardener. He leaves two sons, Tony and Jeremy.

Peter Harmer (30-36)

died 26 December 2007, aged 88.

Geoffrey Young (34-41)

died 31 December 2007, aged 83.

G S Patterson (28-39)

died 3 January 2008 aged 88.

Norman Henderson (37-47)

died 28 March 2008, aged 79.

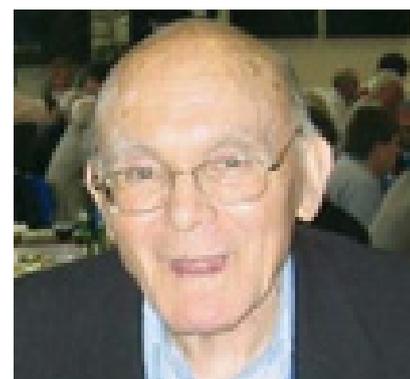
Ivor Gilbert (31-35)

Ivor Gilbert died on 3 December 2007. He entered the School in January 1931, one of three brothers at the RGS, and distinguished himself as a 1st XV Rugby scrum half around 1933 when Mr Owen ran the team. After studying at the London School of Economics, Ivor entered the family business and remained on Tyneside for the whole of his

long life. His proudest moment, he recalled, was in the early 1990's, watching his grandson, **Paul Karter (83-93)** playing for the RGS 1st XV against King's School, with another grandson, Paul's cousin playing for the opposite side.

He was a frequent attendee at ONA Dinners and Novo Days and was always extremely loyal to the School.

David Goldwater (51-62)





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