

## **Address - Simon Northcote-Green, Former Deputy Master, Dulwich College**

Terry Walsh tribute for his Memorial Service on May 2<sup>nd</sup> at Christ's Chapel of God's Gift, Dulwich College.

My thanks to Victoria and Edward to be given the opportunity to say something in memory and appreciation of their father.

Some schoolmasters are memorable, some are not.

Some schoolmasters have long lasting influences on their charges. Some fail despite their attempts to do so and simply don't.

Some view teaching as a vocation, a calling, a belief in developing and educating young minds, body and soul whilst others view their contribution to a school as a job.

I think we all know which definitions apply to the role played by Terence John Walsh, TJW or simply Terry to the College he served from his appointment in 1954 as a 25 year old until March of this year. I was fortunate enough to speak to him the day before he died and asked him which end he would like to bowl from. Victoria said that this drew a wry smile from him before he slipped away.

I first met Terry in the spring of 1989 when he was about to retire from being Deputy Master. He interviewed me with Tony Verity for a two term post in the English Department. We had a lot in common – a love for cricket and rugby and various connections in the teaching world. The interview was drawing to a close when he passed me a scribbled note regarding my starting salary with the following words 'I think you will find this to be an ample sum.' Difficult to refuse and of course I accepted. I still think he got me on the cheap!

Our friendship was sustained from then on and we never had a cross word. Terry always set the standards. He was a stickler for protocol, for abiding by routine, for ensuring that detail was maintained and anything sloppy or careless was addressed. Although some may have had the view that those standards were old fashioned and outdated they were often the very glue that kept the College staff and Old Alleynians together and even Masters of the College and Governors were had to be up to the mark. He was also in many ways forward thinking. He welcomed increasing numbers of female teachers onto the staff when more conservative colleagues expressed their doubts. Equally he always made young members of staff feel at home and would offer guidance and advice if approached. His wisdom was built on experience and modesty. It was never narrow or blinkered. He loved children. My youngest boy said to me the other day 'I used to be really scared of him but then I grew to love him as Uncle Terry.' He loved the rogues too. You would often see them at OA reunions gravitating towards him and mutual affection being immediately generated. The Dulwich boy was one he knew well and he would delight in recounting tales about them. One I recall immediately was when he was sitting in the Chestnuts avenue as a group appeared after a CCF exercise heavily laden with camping kit after an all night expedition. As they strolled past him, Terry asked a straggler how did it all go? 'Fine . thank you, sir' came the reply. Terry then asked him 'Do you know who I am?' to which the boy replied 'Just wait there and don't move. I am just going to find someone to find out for you.'

The term 'legend' should be used sparingly but for a man who devoted so much of his life to a single institution, it may just fit the bill. Terry was a gifted orator and well sought after for addressing a whole variety of after dinner audiences. His anecdotes and stories were never

crude or rude. He would warm to the task and admonish the crowd if they appeared to be slow on the uptake. Equally he could demand boys to give him deserved attention. As Head of the Lower School he was known on more than one occasion to admonish recalcitrant boys at Monday morning assemblies. At one of these Terry was known to have started the Lords prayer with Our Father who art in heaven, and then ' Sit down and shut up you boys at the back. Hallowed be thy name.....

We will all have our cherished memories of Terry. The balcony in the pavilion overlooking the 1<sup>st</sup> X1 square will never be quite the same. One of my regrets in life is that I never saw him bowl nor witness his fabled action, akin to seeing a frog caught in a blender I was told. Rumour has it that when he ran the Alleyn Club office and was instrumental in raising both the awareness and the funds for the Bursary Appeal, he maintained a cricketing theme with an 'in' tray and an 'out' tray and one marked up as LBW – let the buggers wait.

Before I finish with a poem by RS Thomas, I just wanted to mention how dignified Terry was even in troubled times, how his loyalty to the College never wavered and how trustworthy he was as a friend even though he got me on the cheap! His integrity and common sense were always sought out by the young and the old. To quote Richard Cross OA 'when he died it was as if the clock tower had gone.'

Bright Field by RS Thomas I chose this because of Terry's association with the College fields.

I have seen the sun break through to illuminate a small field for a while

And gone my way and forgotten it.

But that was the pearl at great price, the one field that had treasure in it.

I realise now that I must give all that I have to possess it.

Life is not hurrying on to a receding future, nor hankering after an imagined past.

It is the turning aside like Moses to the miracle of the lit bush,

To a brightness that seemed as transitory as your youth once

But is the eternity that awaits you.