

**80 AND NOT OUT!**  
By Andrew Foot (1951-1984)



Andrew Foot was 80 in February. On behalf of The Old Russellians, Julia sent Andrew a card to wish him a Happy Birthday and to wish him well. She also asked him to pen a few words for our next newsletter. Here is his response:

Julia has asked me to pen some memories of our life at Royal Russell School, but it

is difficult to select the most salient features. Our time was divided into three by the houses in which we lived. From 1951-62, we were in New Ballards where our two sons, Peter (53) and Simon (49) were born. For most of those years Kit and Crispin Smith and their two daughters lived below and, although we were desperately poor on £25 per month, we were very happy.

Until the 1980s the X1s played their matches every Wednesday and Saturday, and we lost very few cricket or hockey games though all our opponents were representatives from larger schools.

In 1962 we moved into Oxford House and stayed there until 1973. It was more convenient for me as housemaster, but Lorna and our sons regretted the freedom of the large garden at New Ballards. Our first neighbour was Christopher Tombleson, one of the great schoolmasters. It took some time to learn to know him as he was outwardly daunting, and he was as strict with young colleagues as he was with pupils. He was wholly dedicated to the school and his standards were immensely high. Essays had to be marked and returned within 24 hours! Many are the anecdotes about him and dear William Wright, art master and CCF commander - especially at the Surprise, the local to which they walked. We swore that we'd give up beer when it reached 2/- a pint.

Lorna and I spent our last eleven years in Hill View, the traditional residence of the Deputy Head. That followed the great crisis of 1972 when the governors of the time threatened to sell the school and staff were told they'd not be given references if they opposed the closure. We chanced it and the school was saved.

It is not possible to reduce 33 very happy years to a few words. Many of the pupils and staff would merit chapters to themselves. (60 of them still send us Christmas cards!) There are anecdotes which still reduce us to tears of laughter. We can only be grateful for so many happy memories and for so many good friends.

Andrew Foot, March 2007

Does anyone recognise this ex teacher? He was at the May Reunion. This cartoon is published by kind permission of Jon Sampson. He couldn't have found that particular lesson very interesting!



**PICTURE THE PAST (1950-1960)**

Bill Forster (1948-58) needs your help in creating a slide show on DVD of life at the school in the 1950s which will be offered for sale to 'Really Old Russellians' - and 'youngsters' - on a cost recovery basis with any surplus going to The Old Russellians.

In those days boys and girls lived separate lives from the age of eleven onwards and he plans to start by providing a pictorial record of the experience of the boys, from leaving home at the age of seven to join the kindergarten and primary school at Russell Hill, to leaving the senior boys school at Ballards up to ten years later. A similar record of the lives led by the girls at Russell Hill is envisaged at a later stage.

Bill has found very little suitable material in the school archives and he needs your help in locating photographs and other documents if the project is to succeed.

Do you have photographs taken at Sports Days, Speech Days, Cadet Corps parades or school drama productions? Perhaps you were a member of the photographic society and have informal shots of games of cricket, football or hockey or photographs taken in pets corner, the outdoor swimming pool and the day rooms and dormitories of the three houses at Russell School - or even of boys smoking in the woods!

If you do, or have, other material you think might be suitable, please contact Bill by e-mail, phone or letter. Please remember to supply captions with dates, events and names. He is happy to accept scans (please send 300 dpi TIFFs rather than JPEGs) by e-mail or on CD or originals by post (which will be returned promptly after scanning).

Bill can be contacted at:  
E-mail: [bill@fischer-balcke.de](mailto:bill@fischer-balcke.de) Phone: 01727-838595  
Post: 88 Holywell Hill, St Albans, Hertfordshire AL1 1DH

**DVD FOR SALE**

This very popular DVD contains archive footage from the past 70 years, from Russell Hill School to Royal Russell School. We are now taking orders at £10 plus p&p each, having sold out of copies at the May Reunion. If you would like a copy please contact Julia or Sue.



**THE OLD RUSSELLIANS NEWSLETTER**

SUMMER 2007

**INSIDE THIS ISSUE:**

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

**EXTENDED 5-10 YR MEMBERSHIP**

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2007/2008**

**OBITUARY FOR HARRY CRISPIN SMITH (1913-2007)**

**TRUSWELL BY FARR**

**RRS DEVELOPMENT**

**DUTCH LIBERATION DAY - ZENDEREN**

**MAY REUNION 2007**

**DESPATCHES**

**ANNUAL FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT 2007**

**WE ARE LOOKING FOR . . . .**

**WORK EXPERIENCE**

**80 AND NOT OUT - ANDREW FOOT**

**PICTURE THE PAST**

**CONDOLENCES**

**DVD FOR SALE**

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

**Annual Dinner 2007 - to be held this year on Saturday 24th November**

**CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE**

The past six months have proved to be a very busy, productive and successful period for The Old Russellians, including changing its name back to 'The Old Russellians' from 'Old Russellians' Society'.

The Football Tournament in March was a great success with an excellent turnout, both from players and spectators.

Membership has seen a steady increase, thanks to the industrious efforts of Sue Tanner and Julia Powell.

Positive responses to both the newsletters and website have been welcomed as Old Russellians continue to be kept informed of O.R. news and events.

The Old Russellians is rapidly becoming a working society and this is evident as the committee works tirelessly to bring all members interesting information on news and activities throughout the year.

The main objective now is to keep the momentum going and build on the excellent progress made so far. My utmost thanks go to the O.R. Committee for their time, enthusiasm, continuous hard work and dedication. I would also like to thank John Jennings and Paul Barlow for their help and support of the O.R.s

I look forward to meeting many of you at our forthcoming events.

Karl Yabsley (1978-1982)

**MEMBERSHIP NEWS**

As a result of the mailshot of database forms and invitations to non members for the forthcoming events, we are pleased to say that membership has increased by a significant amount.

Sue received over 100 database forms and emails regarding people's change of address etc.

Sadly, she also received news of some Old Russellians who have passed away recently.

**EXTENDED 5-10yr MEMBERSHIP**

**DID YOU LEAVE SCHOOL BETWEEN 1998 AND 2002?**

If so, we are pleased to report that the Headmaster has agreed to an 'electronic' extension to your membership privileges.

This means that, provided we hold a valid email address for you, you will receive newsletters and other documents electronically, including invitations to all appropriate events, until 10 years after you left the school.

We are delighted to be able to offer this to many of you who are already good supporters of The Old Russellians.

If you do not hear from us soon, then email Sue ([stanner@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:stanner@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk)) with your address and other info for the database.

**DATES FOR YOUR DIARY 2007/2008**

**Friday 7th September**  
'One and Two Years' On' for 2005 & 2006 Leavers  
4 - 6 pm  
By invitation only

**Sunday 9th September**  
Dido and Aeneas by Henry Purcell 7.30pm at St John's Church, Shirley

**Saturday 29th September**  
RRS Open Morning for prospective parents and pupils

**Sunday 4th November**  
Fireworks Display and Fun Fair  
Gates open 5.30pm

**Saturday 6th October**  
Rock 'n' Roll Evening

**Saturday 17th November**  
Parents' Association Christmas Fayre 1pm

**Saturday 24th November**  
Old Russellians' Annual Dinner preceded by AGM

**Sunday 2nd December**  
Advent Carol Service 5.45pm in Chapel

**Sunday 9th December**  
Christmas Carol Service 6.30pm in Great Hall

**Saturday 2nd February 2008**  
Quiz Night

**Saturday 15th March 2008**  
Old Russellians' Annual Football Tournament

**OTHER EVENTS ARE ORGANISED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR - PLEASE CHECK OUR WEBSITE FOR DETAILS: [www.royalrussell.com/OldRussellians](http://www.royalrussell.com/OldRussellians)**

**PHOTO GALLERY**



**THIS IS YOUR NEWSLETTER - PLEASE GIVE US YOUR NEWS AND PHOTOGRAPHS!**  
Email: [jpowell@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:jpowell@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk) or [stanner@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk](mailto:stanner@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk)  
Website: [www.royalrussell.com/OldRussellians](http://www.royalrussell.com/OldRussellians)



## OBITUARY HARRY CRISPIN SMITH 1913-2007



Harry Crispin Smith was born on 25th October 1913 on St Crispin's Day, so his history and poetry conscious parents christened him Harry Crispin, and echoes of Henry V's great speech before Agincourt resounded through his life. Educated at St John's, Leatherhead and Cambridge, he came to Russell School to teach History in 1935. When the war broke out in 1939 he joined the Royal West Kent Regiment, was commissioned and fought with them in two of the most significant battles of the War – El Alamein and Kohima. He was wounded, fortunately not seriously, in both, but returned to the staff at Ballards in 1945. He married Kit whilst on leave from the Army and they had two lovely daughters, Elizabeth and Caroline, whose early years were spent at Ballards. There was no counselling for soldiers in those days and Crispin very naturally was under serious strain, but his devotion to pupils was such that he did not give way, and he was promoted to Senior Master in 1946. He held that position until he retired in 1973, and his influence on staff and pupils was profound through his personality and very high ideals. One incidence of many was his annual Chapel address on Remembrance Sunday. He recollected for us, boys whom he had known before 1939 and he would go down the list, telling us where they had been seated in Chapel and saying how they had died.

'..... wasn't a very academic lad but was a keen games' player. He was burnt to death when his Lancaster was shot down', '..... had gained a university place but joined the Royal Navy in 1940. He was frozen to death when his ship was torpedoed'. Four or five such instances must have taught generations of O.R.s that war is not glorious, and that death in battle is not the clean, sudden occurrence that is portrayed in war films.

Notwithstanding, Crispin had a tremendous sense of humour and he had nicknames for everything from the stance of local cricketers (Addington Crouch) to one of the matrons (The Witch of Enda). A butcher boy, delivering at New Ballards, was severely frightened when Crispin, thinking it was me, stuck his head out at knee level, gibbering with his false teeth outside his mouth. His imitations of our then PE instructor, and his equally cockney ex-pugilist assistant, could reduce the whole Common Room to tears of laughter. Crispin's love of his subject and cricket were communicated to generations of pupils. With very few honourable exceptions, they don't make schoolmasters like that any more - ones who spend their working lives devoted to the school and one who worked in it for, often, fifteen hours a day. Crispin was a great man and he enriched the lives of all of us who were fortunate enough to be in contact with him.

Andrew Foot April 2007



Peter Harrison (1938-1949), an O.R. and old friend of Crispin's, has kindly let us publish his Address from Crispin's Memorial Service on 30th April 2007.



Pictured above: Francis Canning (1960-1972), Jerry Winter (1961-1972), Chris Newdick (1963-1972)  
Pictured left: Tina Oldham (1967-1971), Peter Caplan (1965-1972), Peter Taylor (1944-1952)



## TRUSWELL BY FARR by John Farr (1935-1940) - Deceased May 2007

WILLIAM SIMPSON TRUSWELL

In the recent spate of reminiscences of life at Ballards there is little reference to the outstanding character whose name appears at the heading of this piece. I seek to redress by recounting a few memories of the man known as Trussie, but also as Bill or Old Bill portrayed in the Bairnsfather cartoons of the First World War.

Philip, one of the sons of Headmaster Roberts, told me that his father had taken on Trussie on the basis of his strength of character rather than his academic achievements, for he held only a teacher's certificate rather than a degree. However, it proved to be an inspired decision. Bill taught the junior forms English, History and Scripture quite brilliantly.

As Housemaster of St Andrews, where all new boys spent their first term, Bill had a big hand in deciding who was to remain and which boys would eventually go to the other two houses, Oxford or Cambridge. Such a procedure would try the integrity of a saint, which Bill was not, but he did it as fairly as he could and I was quite happy to be one of those to remain in St Andrews, which was situated in the finest part of the grounds.

Bill ran a very tight ship and one was well advised not to overstep the mark, but his bark was often worse than his bite. He devoted much of his time to the organisation of sporting events, especially athletics, and in the same season was regularly on the Top Field supervising and recording the tests for the Glanfield Shield.

In the First World War Bill joined the Public Schools Battalion and I believe attained the rank of Sergeant, but his active soldiering was cut short by the misfortune of being captured by the enemy and spending the rest of the war behind the wire of a German PoW camp.

He played no formal part in the Cadet Corps, but I remember one occasion when he could not contain himself from taking action. Bill was strolling past our squad where a senior cadet was attempting to teach us Arms Drill and making a bit of a hash of it. Bill intervened and, seizing a rifle, proceeded to show us how it should be done correctly.

In this sense he played a part in launching me on my subsequent military career.

Bill should be remembered for his organising and conduct of the field sports for the Glanfield Shield, which consisted of running within a certain time and jumping high and long above a certain minimum. Every boy was expected to try these tests and acquire points for his house. It would have been very boring for the organiser, but Bill, with stopwatch and measuring tape in hand, did it every year with enthusiasm.

For relaxation, Bill used to retire to his favourite haunt, the Sandrock pub in Shirley village. Among the regular customers with whom Bill had become friendly were several who were entertainers and Bill never missed the opportunity of getting them up to school to entertain us. In those non-television days such occasions were much appreciated.

Bill adhered to a code of conduct and a set of values which were quite normal in the Victorian times in which he grew up, but which are rarely observed today. The following story illustrates this point.

One evening after Lights Out a real rumpus blew up in Oxford and Cambridge, targeted at a certain master, and it spilled over to breakfast the following morning. It was of no concern to us in St Andrews and we stayed silent and aloof. After House Prayers that evening, Bill, pointing to a boy named Francis Anderson, said, "Why did we not behave like cads last night?" Anderson was petrified and stood transfixed like a rabbit caught in headlights, but no sound came. Bill's finger then pointed at David McKergo and he repeated the question. McKergo drew himself up and replied, "Because, Sir, we are not cads". "That", said Bill "is the answer I wanted to hear". Then, without further words, he strode out of the room.

## FOOTBALL TOURNAMENT MARCH 2007



Winning Team 2005 Leavers from team 'Elite 07' captained by Chris Taylor and Ben Ellis

As usual, an excellent tournament, despite the freezing weather conditions, with 7 O.R. and 2 School teams playing. This was the first occasion that both Top and West Pitches had to be used to get all matches played. Thanks must go to Steve Greaves, Oxford Housemaster, for all his organisation together with the following O.R.s who recruited and captained the teams:

Alex Armstrong (1991-1998), Adam Cannon (1995-1999), Darren Shewry (1993-2000), Ben Ellis (1997-2005) and Chris Taylor (1998-2005), Andy Bicourt (1993-2000), Scott Campbell (1995-2003) and Madaliso Simango (1999-2004).

Steve Greaves especially wants to thank Kwame Kumah (1996-2003) for both his black eye and suspected broken nose!

A number of non-playing spectators braved the elements on the day to support the teams, whilst Bob Ellis (Oxford House Tutor) ran his usual burger bar. Team photographs were made up during the afternoon, and sold in aid of the summer expedition to Kenya. Copies of these photographs can be viewed and purchased through the website.



Jane Bruce (1993-2000) and Shona Patel (1994-2001) watch John Piggini (Cambridge Housemaster) in action!

John Piggini and Steve Greaves swapping tactics with Alex Armstrong's team



## WE ARE LOOKING FOR ....

... the following members who get no benefits from their membership because we have no address for them. If you know any of these people, please contact us.

I. Golder  
L. Hyde  
K.J. Whittaker  
Miss S.J. Gillett (1959-1961)  
Mary Pearson (1948-1953)  
Anthony C. Turner (1972-1988)  
Tasuku Yoshida (left in 1997)  
Franziska Bath (2000-2002)  
Gavin DeCosta (1997-2004)  
Alexander Enahoro (left 2003)  
Sim Tai (left 2003)  
David Wang (left 2004)

... the following Old Russellians who others are looking for:  
Marjorie Hazel Donovan (at school 1951-1964, dob 17.5.46)  
Christine Gay Saunderson (at school 1951-1963, dob 5.7.45)  
Malcolm Gamlen (1953-1960)  
Paul Brown (left school 1982)  
Sisters, Cynthia and Thelma Price (left pre-1960)  
Sisters, Margaret and Anne MacPherson (left pre-1960)

## WORK EXPERIENCE

We are looking for Old Russellians to help our current pupils with work experience in any of the following fields:

Accountancy	Architecture
Banking	Drama/media
Engineering	Estate agent
Fashion	Geology
Graphic design	ICT related
Insurance	Journalism
Law	Media related
Medical related	Music industry
Product design	Science research
Sealife centres/ Marine biology	
Translator	Working with young children

If you can help, please contact the Head of Careers, Sandra Culbert, at school on 020 8657 4433 or email Sandra at sculbert@royalrussell.croydon.sch.uk