

Despatches - January 2007



FROM OUR OWN CORRESPONDENT

Roger Thomas (50-58) writes that he was “impressed” (excuse me, I’d like to read that again) by “Despatches” in the last Newsletter. **Bill Forster** (48-58), **Colin Barrable** (51-56), Dr. **John Harrison** (47-58) were all his classmates and news of “longer-term” OR’s such as **Tony Ford** ((47-58) was also good to read. “Any news of **Chris Hirtes** (51-58)?” he asks. Roger and his brother Alan have developed their own hotel (www.peninsulabeachresort.com) in the bliss of Bali where they both spend most of the year. Any OR refugees returning from England’s cricket debacle down under would have found happier times staying chez Roger. But he is coming to the OR Reunion this year to catch up with his contemporaries then.

Talking of cricket, **Stewie Williams** (57-63) referred to in the last issue, was not only Captain of the 1st Eleven but records show he was also Best Prefect (this column really finds the luminaries). He asks about former master **Harry Crispin-Smith**. “That man was a wonderful teacher, teaching his pupils like soldiers and, when in the WW2 Burma campaign, teaching his soldiers like school pupils.” Crispin, as he became known, served on the staff of Commander-in-Chief Lord Louis Mountbatten and appears in a well-published iconic photograph of a front-line briefing, Crispin relaxing and smoking his pipe contentedly. **Stuart Adams** (46-50) also asks about Crispin “...for whom I had great respect, as I did for another master, **Carrick Smith**, both excellent school masters and unforgettable. I speak now as Governor of our local Secondary School which has 1500 pupils and 170 staff, of whom half are teaching. None could approach the teachers we had.”

The Editor of this column wouldn’t rate very highly either with Stuart. We did get some dates wrong last time. Apologies. School years of Stuart’s brother **John** were 48-52 and brother **Richard** 52-57. Stuart is in touch with **Frank Griffiths** (41-53) and his wife Sheila and exchanges e-mails with **John Hughes** (40-46) who was in sparkling form at the recent OR Dinner. Stuart had been the fag for John Hughes in 1946, we hear. Hope he kept his locker tidy. Do readers have news of any contemporaries? **John Wood** (41-52) House Captain of St. Andrew’s who came from Iffley, Oxford? **Peter Stock** (46-50) of Oxford House and Lamorna Cove, Cornwall? **Paul Clark** (46-50) of Cambridge House and from Exeter?

Dr. Chris Meigh-Andrews writes from East London on behalf of his mother **Margaret Bean** (35-43), later Mrs Andrews, now living in Essex. She is keen to trace school friend **Betty Warner** (35-44). Betty was one of four in the Warner family all at the school together. We have recently heard from Phil, the son of **Michael Warner** (38-48) that brother **Tony** (36-49)

is living in France, and senior brother **John** (35-45) died some 20 years ago. Betty herself, now Mrs Gibson, was recently widowed and lives in Rye.

Joan Butler (33-39) joined the Women's Auxiliary Air Force (WAAF) during WW2, later being discharged for ill health and dying in October 1946. We've had some enquiries and any reader who knew Joan or more about her ... do please contact the website or Keith Angel who covers the pre-60 leavers. (Contact details following)

After 18 months in New Zealand, **John Bryant Cook** (48-54) writes from Ilkeston in Derbyshire that he'll be on his way to the OR Reunion on 19 May together with brother **Graham** (49-60) who, says John, deserves a sort of silver medal. That's if **Francis MacMahon** (39-52) ever gets a gold for a record 13 years spent at school, as we reported. But, hey, look above at **Tony Warner** (36-49). Looks like a photo-finish but we'd still like to hear from other claimants before dispensing precious metal reserves from the OR vaults.

When it comes to tracking down 'lost' OR's some readers are better sleuths than Bloodhounds. Here's a few for the ladies. The following are married, we know, but what were their maiden (school) names, when were they born and what are their addresses?

World cruises (first class) on offer for information.

Mrs A **Bellis**, Mrs **Ann White** (school years 49-54), Mrs **Diana Moule** (51-55), Mrs **Louise Griffin**, Mrs **Margaret Stevenson** (49-60), Mrs **S Fanthorne**.

From Postling, Hythe in Kent, Harry **Crispin Smith** who is 94 this year recalls that he joined the staff at School in 1936, becoming Oxford House Master and Deputy Head Master. "My memories of teaching there are very happy ones and I often look back on them with great pleasure. What a good Head Madden was!" As many OR's know, Crispin's wife **Kit** sadly died recently. They had been married happily for 66 years and Crispin has temporarily moved now from his Dorset home to be with daughters **Elizabeth** and **Caroline**.

Generations of Russellians hold a special regard and affection for Crispin and his family and many are keeping in touch with him directly. "It's been very nice to hear, he says, from **Andrew McWilliam** (33-40), **Lt.Col. John Farr** (35-40), **Tony Ford** (48-58), **Peter Harrison** (38-49), **Chris Neale** (41-51) and former master **Andrew Foot** from time to time and several others besides."

Andrew McWilliam (33-40) from Kirkcudbright where he lives with his wife Jean says he enjoyed going through a list of OR 'Ancients'. (Well, that's one way of putting it!) "One delightful deception in life is to recall faces from names and still see them as they were in their young days, untouched and untroubled by time." he says. We wish ! His sister **Jean McWilliam** (36-47) , now Mrs Wathin, has moved from Harrogate with husband Godfrey to Abergavenny. "What happened to the **Howell** brothers?" he asks. Who can help on that?

Welcome news from **John Dutton** (38-45) who left school early at age 14 together with brother **Graham** (40-45) because his widowed mother remarried. Thus they no longer qualified as 'an orphan or necessitous foundationer'. After National Service in 1949 John entered Building Controls as a profession, finally retiring in 1996. Marrying in 1953 and first living on the Bournville Village Trust, he has two children, Paul and Louise. Twenty years ago he moved to Bromsgrove. John has dug up a fun but fuzzy 1938 pic of the Hope Morley

House. We'll get working digital wonders on it for another issue! (To those in it ... you all looked very sweet. Whatever happened ?)

DID YOU LEAVE SCHOOL **BEFORE 1960** ? SEND US YOUR NEWS ... OR DO YOU WANT TO KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO ...? OR WHERE THEY ARE ?

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