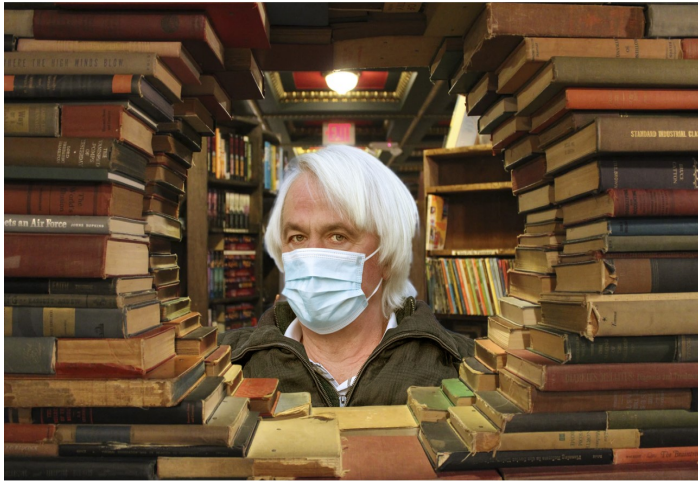




# Royal Russell School Old Russellians

## Newsletter Summer 2021

### Adrian Edwards, OR Committee Chair (At School 1969-1976)



March 2020 through to March 2021 has proven to be a difficult and challenging year for all of us in various aspects of our lives. We have had to adjust the ways we work and keep in touch with each other dramatically. The use of facilities like Zoom and Microsoft Team, have become ideal in communicating for pleasure, work and education and will no doubt continue to be used for some time to come. I wonder if, like me, you have become fascinated with the visual images this has provided, people with unusually long hair surrounded by shelves of

books and other pieces of clutter that adorn the rooms they are in, sometimes giving us interesting insights into their lives, professions and personalities?

As you are aware, the OR Society was stymied in almost everything we had planned for last year. The future organisation of any events is also currently on hold until we know we are safe to proceed without the threat of further Covid-19 lockdowns that would necessitate in wholesale cancellations once again.

There is clearly light at the end of the tunnel now and hopefully the current Government advice that June 21<sup>st</sup> will be the end of this current lockdown will mean we can start to formulate plans for the future. As you can imagine, the Committee will take great care and consideration in arranging new events and, hopefully, the resurrection of some of those cancelled from last year. The availability of various venues, including the school, will no doubt be in demand while at the same time having to be in much reduced numbers. Currently, the only planned event on the horizon is the Old Russellians Golf Day which can be considered fairly safe given that it will take place at the end of July and is to be held entirely outside in hopefully good weather.

Any further news prior to our next Autumn Newsletter will be posted on the School Website in the Old Russellians section as well as the various digital platforms we use. As always, ORs are always very welcome to contact the Society via OR secretary Vicky Rees [vrees@royalrussell.co.uk](mailto:vrees@royalrussell.co.uk)

May I take this opportunity to wish you all the best on behalf of the OR Committee and stay safe.

# ROYAL RUSSELL DURING LOCKDOWN

## Chris Hutchinson, Headmaster

After the UK Government first announced the closure of schools in March 2020, Royal Russell was in uncharted territory. One of the benefits of being nearly 170 years old is we know that this is not the first time we have faced what feels like an incredible challenge. Far from it, we know that the school has weathered the storms of two World Wars, the threat of closure and, indeed, the global pandemic of 1918. As the Headmaster at this particular point in global history, I was acutely aware of the responsibility of navigating the school through this period and also ensuring all pupils and members of staff retained their sense of Russellian community whilst in a period of restricted contact. In March 2020, of course, we didn't realise what the full extent of the lockdown would be. At this point we were switching to online provision for the pupils with the view to returning to in-person learning at some point after Easter. The staff body worked hard to prepare for a successful period of remote learning for our pupils in both the Senior School and the Junior School and we found that parents and pupils rapidly adapted to their new environments and new ways of learning.

An online system called Firefly was the primary tool for sharing resources, giving feedback and for setting and receiving work. Pupils and parents were already familiar with its functionality and we ensured that all pupils were able to access resources for their classes. This was supported by live teaching sessions on Microsoft Teams which allowed for teachers to use a range of methods to deliver materials in a virtual classroom. Lesson plans became more and more adventurous benefitting from a mix of video, presentations and other visual resources.

As it became apparent that online learning was to continue on into the Summer Term, daily contact with our pupils became even more important. We knew that as much as our online learning was ensuring pupils continued to make progress, our sense of community is what makes Royal Russell truly special; and being apart made it more difficult to stay feeling connected. We worked hard to ensure that they felt as connected as possible to each other during the periods of remote learning by providing a weekly video update and letter as well as the Headmaster's Newsletter. We received lovely feedback from parents who complimented our personal approach and felt their children benefited from a more social form of communication. In May 2020 we launched a hugely successful campaign for wellbeing week called 'The Kindness for Community Challenge' to remind pupils to check in with each other and to spread kindness to others. You can view a photo montage of the week [here](#).

We all know that as the year has passed, we have longed for the freedoms we previously enjoyed to return. It's been an incredibly challenging year for our entire community and the sense of uncertainty has resulted in increased feelings of anxiety and concern. There is no magic cure for how we have navigated this past year, however, what we have kept at the forefront of our minds when making every decision is our constant – the School motto; 'Non Sibi Sed Omnibus' (Not For Oneself But For All). In this way, whilst we know we can learn lessons from what went well and what could have been better, we know that we proceeded with kindness in our hearts and with consideration for others.

These are the most extraordinary times, and even when we finally emerge from lockdown and back to some semblance of normality, the repercussions of this last year will continue to be felt for some time to come. Whilst we're delighted to have returned to safely learning together here at Royal Russell, we know we all still have a role to play in keeping our community safe. I remain incredibly impressed with the personal responsibility the pupils have taken and their sense of resilience. The spirit they have shown and determination to progress despite global uncertainty reminds me of their forbears and you can be proud that Royal Russell pupils still show the same resilience and kindness they always have.

# A GAME OF CHESS

by Anthony Mak (at RRS 1974 - 82)

In 1973-74, a year before joining Royal Russell Junior School, I played competitive chess for a good chess playing school where I had prospects. At the age of 9, I came 5th in the Surrey County Chess Congress (Minors) and 8th in London Chess Congress (Minors), in which entrants had to be 11 years-old or younger to enter.

Buoyed by my success, I was keen on trying to win these competitions before time disqualified me. This dream was sadly not to be, as Royal Russell was not a chess playing school: it had no team and no one who could train me.

In my first few years at the school, it was not uncommon to see me walking around with a chess set



desperate to find good players from whom I could learn. But, it became fairly evident that from the age of 10, I was possibly the best player in the school (seniors included). At one point, Mr Foot and Mr King showed interest in forming a chess club, but when I swiftly dispatched both of them, for some reason the club never materialised.

The details of how and when I eventually came to found the school chess club are a bit vague in my mind, but I believe it was around 1979-80, when I was in the 5th Form or Lower-6th. We tried to play regularly on a fixed

day of the week after school. On one evening, we were surprised to be joined by a distinguished man with great presence who came from outside the school. He told us his name was John Keable that he was chairman of the school's Governors, connected with the British Chess Federation, and a Chess Master. Wow!

Mr Keable had heard about our chess club, and he wanted to see it for himself. To be precise, he wanted (insisted) on playing me. It was only later I discovered it was a test, to see if our club was worth investing in.

I played the best game of my life, which involved us battling over a pawn in the middle game that was key to the success of both sides. It was a deadlock just waiting for me to make a mistake in awe of this greater player - until he offered me his hand for a draw! He had seen enough and was keen to discuss this fun game (his words) and press on home. The next time we heard from Mr Keable was when the Headmaster informed me that we were to receive a visit from Dutch Grandmaster, Jan Timmans, known as "The Best of the West", because he was second in the world to Anatoly Karpov with whom he contested the FIDE World Championship in 1993.

Timmans was to play a simultaneous chess exhibition against our chess club in which 20 or so chess boards were laid out to form a square with Timmans (after each move) moving from board-to-board in one direction within the square, and when he arrived back at ones board one was forced to make a move. Although this sounds impressive, it is not actually that difficult as even I managed to get a 6-0 win when I played the Junior School chess team.

After Timmans, we were visited by Russian world champion, Vasily Smyslov, who was on eight occasions a candidate for the world title, which he held from 1957-58. His total of 17 Chess Olympiad medals is an all-time record.

Then Boris Spassky visited the school. His household name and battles in the 70s against Fischer and Karpov are legendary. It was my greatest honour in chess to meet and play him.

## A GAME OF CHESS CONT...

The last 'simul' I played at Shant was supposed to be against Anatoly Karpov - one of the greatest players of all time with 160 first-place finishes, including the world title from 1975-85. His highly charged confrontation with Bobby Fischer hit the papers, making both of them instant household names. Thus, there was an electric atmosphere when news broke that he was coming to play us. We could hardly contain ourselves.

Imagine then our huge disappointment to hear that he had been substituted at the last minute by some guy...what's his name...it'll come to me....yes...Garry Kasparov! At the time, we had no idea who he was nor how famous he was to become. Eclipsing the talent of both Karpov and Fischer, Kasparov changed the face of chess.

And how did my games go? I was proud to have held my own against Timmans, Smyslov and Spassky well into the middle game before being completely crushed, but against Kasparov my game was lost by move 8 and couldn't have lasted more than 25 moves in total before I resigned, not due to any immediate threat, but in shame for allowing a lost position and respect for whom I was playing. It was the first time in my life to experience being a bystander to my own demise in a slow motion train crash, unable to do anything about it. In a word: torture.

My fate with Kasparov was actually decided before I had even made my first move. Let me explain. When word of a Grandmaster 'simul' with Kasparov spread quickly through the chess world, the school ended up hosting unannounced players from far and wide. I even took a call from Leonard Barden (chess columnist at the Evening Standard) who had sent someone he insisted we give a seat. It was complete frantic chaos and people needed to be barred. I recall that Mr Balaam was concerned and unimpressed.

After the dust settled, we were hosting at least 50 boards and I had no idea who these people were nor how good they were, which matters because convention places the strongest player on board one, the next strongest on board two, and so on. Meaning in the absence of information board one was me!

Kasparov, while playing white, employed a devious opening with strange pawn moves, where his knight skipped around the board causing me all sorts of grief. I have not seen the like of it since and cannot replay it as my scoresheet (with our moves and his signature) was stolen.

Little did I know that among us were titled players, including the Surrey champion who achieved a draw on board 25 or thereabouts, and to this day I wonder how I would have fared had our boards been swapped. So, how was it that these great players came to visit us at Royal Russell?

Although Mr Keable was a capable player, I do not believe he had the gravitas to pull the necessary strings to influence these champions. However, it is on record (in Ronald Balham's book RRS 1980-1996, Bramwell Press 2009) that Mr Keable was well connected with Sir Stuart Milner-Barry KCVO, CB, OBE, whom he persuaded to join the school's Board of Governors.

Mr Balaam writes, "[Sir Stuart] was Chess Correspondent for the Times from 1938-45, a member of British International Chess teams from 1937-61 and President of the British Chess Federation from 1970-73." He was a former Under Secretary of the Treasury 1954-66 and during the war worked as a code breaker in Bletchley Park, and was likely portrayed in the film 'Enigma' with a chessboard on his desk in Hut 6. Thus, Sir Stuart, it would seem had both the chess and political gravitas to impress these men.

It was later explained to me that when chess dignitaries visited the UK to play in British tournaments, they would often stay with Mr Keable at his home. My speculation is he thus used his hospitality and relationship with Sir Stuart to influence them to our benefit; a charity to which I am eternally grateful.





# ORGS

## OLD RUSSELLIANS GOLF DAY



**FRIDAY 30th JULY 2021**

**TO BE HELD AT :  
WOLDINGHAM GOLF CLUB  
HALLILOO VALLEY ROAD  
WOLDINGHAM  
CR3 7HA**

[www.woldinghamgc.co.uk](http://www.woldinghamgc.co.uk)

**The venue is situated close to the M25 (Jct 6) and is a 6000 yard par 71 course  
Bacon Bap and Coffee on arrival  
Sandwiches after the game**

**Cost:  
Golf & Food £50  
Buggy £30**

**Arrive by 1.00pm  
First tee time 2.00pm**

**Prizes for First and Second Place,  
Longest Drive and Nearest the Pin**



**PLEASE CONTACT  
VICKY REES : [vrees@royalrussell.co.uk](mailto:vrees@royalrussell.co.uk)  
NEW MEMBERS ARE VERY WELCOME**

# ANDREW FOOT 1927 - 2021

By Colin Cameron (at RRS 1975 - 1983)

Inspirational teacher to so many Russellians in the classroom, Deputy Head and Senior Master for a decade or more, such was the stature of Andrew Foot that those successive generations of pupils could be forgiven for imagining that he had been there from the foundation of the school in 1853!

Yet, although this inspirational man embodied the heritage of Royal Russell, he was never one to devote himself to any restrictive nostalgia for what are often termed “the good old days”; rather, being blessed with a deep and genuine enthusiasm to harness and train the curiosity of youth, he moved effortlessly with the times and, even on his retirement in 1984, was happy to embrace change. Culture shifts, even revolutions, were all the same to him. Indeed, he would have sat equally as comfortably amid the contemporary tenets of education that prevail today.



The truth is that he began his time at Royal Russell in 1951 and served the school for 34 years and it might not be too arrogant a claim that the school would not be here today if it were not for Mr Foot’s fervour. In November 1972, the school faced closure the following July but, at what proved to be the decisive meeting the November before at ‘The Court’ on Harley Street, Andrew gave an impassioned speech to the governors of the time, seeking support for a rescue package. In addressing the board, Andrew chose a mix of the prosaic to convey the complexities, nub and urgency of the situation, and the poetic to inspire all to see the vision he had of a school flourishing long beyond the millennium ahead. The resonance of his words, along with the contribution of those of other figures similarly inspired, averted the prospect of the school’s history ending after a mere 120 years. Furthermore by the end of that decade, Her Majesty The Queen, the school’s long-standing patron, had visited to mark the quasiquintennial of Royal Russell School.



Andrew had an expert way with words. He could equally have delivered his heartfelt sentiments in Chaucer’s Middle English, his mastery of which was rooted in an education at Taunton’s School, Southampton and subsequently at St Edmund Hall, Oxford. His time at university was interrupted by National Service, which he spent in the Royal Navy. The dignified composure he always showed (and perhaps also an officer’s wardrobe with trouser hems rarely more than a millimetre above the ground!) might well have been attributable to a rounded awareness that “worse things happen at sea”, a philosophy that served him well both in the classroom and within the Common Room.

*Teaching staff at RRS rejoicing as Mr Foot reads out a Press statement giving the news that the school has been saved.*

# ANDREW FOOT 1927 - 2021

At the 'chalk-face', teaching History and English, he enthused many with his love of language. To say he taught English is to convey inadequately the vibrancy of lessons that inspired some to follow in his footsteps both in terms of profession and specialist discipline. His promotions, first to Housemaster of Oxford House in 1959, and then to Deputy Head and Senior Master in 1974, were testimony of the esteem in which he was held by colleagues. There was no other candidate to consider for the role when the school required an 'acting head' pending the arrival of Ron Balaam in 1980.



Andrew gave selflessly of his time to co-curricular activities that mirrored his own deep-set passions. From his love of English flowed naturally an enthusiasm for school theatre. He helped produce and direct many a play for the Great Hall stage, the most acclaimed being *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *Love's Labour's Lost*. We can see a pattern here?! To Andrew Foot, Shakespeare was incomparable. His choreography of Martin Clunes as Costard grappling with a descent from the Great Hall balcony, gave the audience, as Clunes himself has referenced on many occasions since, a head start on the nation yet to be initiated in the comic genius of *Men Behaving Badly*. As for Andrew's staff pantomimes, these showed how a force of nature can prevail upon others to accept levity amid any necessary gravitas required of boarding school life.

Andrew was equally prolific in his contribution to the outdoor life of his pupils. His good friend and ally, Peter Green, Third Master and loyal supporter of the Deputy Head, calculated (and this will come as no great surprise to anyone who also had the pleasure of knowing Mr Green!) that, in coaching the hockey and cricket First XIs, Andrew Foot had spent at least 3300 hours umpiring and a further 1000+ hours in the nets. We can add in his supervision of football, overseeing the First XIs and Second XIs for many seasons, thereby completing Andrew's personal 'triple crown'.

Further afield, the county of Kent was the beneficiary of his skills as an administrator in the years when he served as Honorary Secretary of Kent Schools Hockey Association. Moreover, Andrew's coaching prowess saw him elevated to the position of head coach to the South-East Schoolboys team and then to the England Schoolboys, taking the national team to the ill-fated 1972 Olympic Games in Munich.

Out of all of Andrew's sporting pursuits, cricket could have been invented for his personal traits to shine through. At whatever level Andrew might have played the game, he would always have been a gentleman. The duration of cricket, even when limited to just an afternoon, meant opportunities for him to observe and deliver quiet, timely words of encouragement and rallying calls as required.

After a game, the natural raconteur in him had the time and space to ensure his stories were not delivered in haste but to be savoured in full, not least when amid the Caterham Strollers, whom he captained for many years. Each ball of his almost metronomic, swing bowling was executed without any distress if leather reached the boundary or any over-zealous celebrations if he had outfoxed a batsman, not with the bravado of flat-out pace so prominent today but by the sort of guile and invention that can make a long walk back to the pavilion somewhat humbling. Of course, even if he was inwardly delighted by this, it was never publicly evident that this was his intention. As a schoolboy batsman, the signal from Andrew as an umpire that your innings was over never felt quite so terminal and your dismissal never so bleak as when the message was delivered by others.

# ANDREW FOOT 1927 - 2021

Andrew's departure from the wider field of play has produced a steady and ongoing string of tributes. Knowing his sense of humour, he might have enjoyed most the accolade afforded him by one former pupil that he was "the only teacher I actually liked". "Praising what is lost makes the remembrance dear" (All's Well That Ends Well); many expressions of sadness for his passing confirm what an especially formative influence Andrew Foot has had upon a multitude of souls. So many have left Royal Russell with Andrew's counsel resonating in both their hearts and their heads.

From 'Hillview' by the Coombe Hill gates, which he and Lorna called home for many years, their beloved West country called them and it was from Cornwall that they have both now eventually passed.

As the school's first ever Careers' Master (an appointment he undertook in 1953), Andrew may also have had a particular hand in shaping any number of paths beyond those gates. Instead of any census to quantify his contribution to lives beyond Royal Russell School, we are all for now best served in spending a moment or two reflecting with admiration upon the route which Andrew Foot himself took, a route which has benefited thousands of Russellians, past, present and future.

## ANDREW FOOT - A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

**By Gill Paschkes-Bell**

Once, in the Great Hall at Royal Russell – it must have been at a school play – I saw Andrew Foot sitting with his arm round his young son, Simon. Such a display of open affection pierced me at the time. Most boys I knew would have been embarrassed if their dads did that. It seemed a different world from the circles I moved in. This image stayed with me, along with other memories. Like the bus ride back from the Aldwych theatre where the whole form had gone to see Peter Brooke's astonishing *Midsummer Night's Dream*. Andrew walked through the coach as it rumbled through the darkness with its sleepy load of teenagers. Paused to lay a hand on my head as I dozed, ask, 'Are you all right?' I wanted to know what he thought of the production. He said: *'It's the best thing I've ever seen.'* Then I knew for sure what I already guessed – that I'd just seen something truly extraordinary.

I loved to hear Andrew's reminiscences of times past at the school. For example, the twins who went about together, sharing a single pair of specs between them. On nights of the full moon, he said, one of them would start thumping his head on his pillow. Andrew, as house-master of Oxford House, would reach out a hand gently to still the troubled head. But, immediately, the brother's head would take up the thumping. And there would be Andrew, poised between two beds, reaching out in both directions to calm the moon-struck pair ... A fourth picture, Andrew, to me, on cricket: *'If you knew it, you'd like the game. There's a lot of psychology in it.'*

Mr Foot – as, of course, we called him then – taught me English for five years, from third form, as it was known, to sixth form, when he taught Chaucer and Shakespeare, leaving more modern writers to Mr Hester. To sit and hear Chaucer read aloud by someone who sounded as if he might be reading it with some measure of authenticity was something that felt rare and precious to me. To have these old texts taught by someone who read them with his heart as well as his intellect opened a channel to something deep and precious. And then, to feel that this teacher rated my work, rated me (though he once admonished me for being too hard on myself), and was willing to invest time in tutoring and mentoring me, lit a lamp that has stayed with me through life.

Andrew encouraged me to think I might become a writer, and that stayed with me through the decades that followed in which I did no such thing. Through all that time, in a low-key way I nursed the uncomfortable feeling that I was somehow letting him, as well as myself, down. But I also felt he would understand.



# ANDREW FOOT - A PERSONAL TRIBUTE

He once told me that many of the 'foundations' – those of us who were at Royal Russell on a bursary from the Warehousemen, Clarks and Drapers who set the school up – often didn't do as well as we might if there hadn't been problems early in our lives. Well, I was one of those foundations. And my own particular set of difficulties gave rise to confusions it took me decades to resolve before I came through to some kind of wholeness. So far as writing was concerned, during those years I felt I had nothing to say.

I visited Andrew and Lorna in his native Cornwall after he'd retired and I'd moved to Scotland. I introduced him, then, to the man who is now my husband, another Andrew. Then I lost touch with him when we moved from Scotland to Wales to build a house on land that used to belong to my mother. I'd mislaid my address book in the move, and at the same time become busier than I'd ever been – partly with house building and family matters, but also, at last, with writing. For my husband was now working on a novel idea that had been with him for twenty years, an idea that resonated with me about a man who runs away from failure and finds himself washed up on an island where, at last, he is given time, space and tools to face himself. I was working with my husband, researching, editing, and drafting portions of the book myself, many of which remain in the text now published. When *The Seaborne* by A.G.Rivett came out in November 2019, I wanted to send a copy to Andrew Foot and say, 'Look what we've done. What do you think of it?' But I no longer knew where to send it, or whether Andrew was still alive, or well enough to read it. And I was so busy, I never made time to find out. I also wanted to let him know that I was working on a novel idea of my own. That the lamp he had lit for me all those years ago was still lighting my way, and that now it hangs right over my writing desk.

I like to think that, in the mystery of the transition we must all face at death, Andrew is somehow in a place where he knows these things, and where I can thank him for the abiding quality he brought into my life. But, for sure, he will never read a copy of *The Seaborne* now. I hope that the time will be given to me in which to complete my own novel; that one day it will be published and read. When that day comes, it will be right to dedicate it to Andrew's memory. That will feel like a completion, a fulfilment – and an offering.

## Gillian Paschkes-Bell

*I arrived at Russell Hill School at the beginning of the summer term of 1961, aged six. That was on the old Purley site. Then we juniors moved to join the seniors on the larger, Ballards, site, with us little ones housed in what became known as the Hope Morley. That's where I was at the time of the Queen's visit in 1963 – us girls turned out in special pale blue dresses gifted by Selfridges for the special day. I left at the end of the Christmas term of 1973 after sitting Cambridge entrance for a second time. I didn't get in, though – which led to my having the considerable privilege instead of doing English and Drama, as it was offered in the mid 1970's at Exeter. For some reason, I notice my name never got inscribed on one of those memory boards that now line the stairs and passages of the classroom block.*

*Andrew Foot, is held in many hearts.*

Christine Samuels (née Bool) as Solerio and Madeleine Pallas in *The Merchant of Venice*, a production choreographed by Andrew Foot.



**FURTHER TRIBUTES TO ANDREW CAN BE FOUND ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE:**

<https://www.royalrussell.co.uk/community/old-russellians/message-board/andrew-foot>

# FOOTBALL

*By Rhys Norrington-Davis*

The early years of my life were incredible. Born in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia to living in Nairobi, Kenya. My years in Kenya were great, so many memories that will last a lifetime as well as my closet friends. I was brought up in Aberystwyth. Those of you who actually know where this is will know it's in the middle of nowhere. As a young teenager I was a keen sportsman and enjoyed every sporting activity including tennis, rugby, skiing, biking and especially football! At the age of 16, I was released from Swansea City Football Academy and this is when I took the opportunity to join Royal Russell School in 2017.



With the football programme emerging at RRS, I joined in the Lower Sixth of RRS as a boarder in Oxford house. As a boarder I spent the majority of my time with my fellow house mates. Adjusting and adapting to the vigorous study periods whilst being a boarder, in particular evening prep, was something I definitely wasn't used to. Sunday evenings used to be my favourite time as this was football time at the Astro pitch. We used to round up as many of the fellow boarders as possible and

have a football game that used to get very heated on occasions and even Mr Greaves, Mr Dear and Mr Bueno would join in. In Upper Sixth, we enjoyed much success with the 1XI football team. That particular year we went on to win the treble, with the most prestigious being the ISFA U18 Boodles National Cup. I have to say I think we set the standard incredibly high for those who will follow in years to come.

Since leaving RRS I've found myself in the world of a professional footballer. At the age of 18 I joined Sheffield United as a part of their U23's team and within the first six months of being there I had earned a place in the first team changing room and a call up to Wales U21 national team. Following this, I have enjoyed successful loan spells at Barrow AFC (National league), Rochdale AFC (League one) and more recently Luton Town (Championship) and Stoke City (Championship). Just short of my 22<sup>nd</sup> birthday, I surpassed 100 senior appearances as a professional, which if you told me this would follow my time at RRS I would have thought you were crazy! In the Autumn of 2020, I received my first call up to the Wales national team, to date I have a total of four senior caps and have played against the likes of Bulgaria, Ireland, Finland and Mexico. With the Euros closely approaching this summer, it is my aim to make the 23 man squad which would be a massive achievement for me personally. I am aware that I have much learning to do on the pitch, however, my main goal is to play in the Premier League and to maintain this high level of football for as long as possible.



The friendships I made at Royal Russell are ones to last a lifetime and I regularly keep in touch with a number of international and day boarders. The team we achieved success with during my time at Royal Russell is still very close and we have an annual Old Russellian fixture against the current first X1 football team at the beginning of each academic year, however, this hasn't been possible this year due to obvious reasons. It's always great to go back to the school and see the Headmaster and other members of staff and look forward to coming back soon.

## THE STROLLERS 1986

This photograph seems all the more pertinent due to two of the players kneeling at the front being already included in this edition of the OR Newsletter. Both sadly passed this last year and both were keen cricketers with Arif top scoring in this game with 51 runs! We are hoping to arrange a function in memory of Andrew Foot in 2022 and will make an announcement in the next Newsletter later this year.



**Back Row:** Colin Teasdale, Jerry Winter (OR 1966-1973), Clive Hicks (Staff 1975-1982), Rowley Waters, Chris Teasdale, Steve Cranmer, Quentin Spurring, Nigel Gorely (OR 1969-1974), Bob Stokes  
**Front Kneeling:** John Piggin (Staff 1974-2013), Simon Foot, Arif Ebrahim (OR 1981-1984), Andrew Foot (Staff 1951-1984)

## NEW DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATIONS

We welcome Victoria Deadman Gatt as the new Director of Community and Communications here at Royal Russell School. Within her remit she will look after Alumni Relations, Marketing and Communications, Admissions and Development.

Victoria wrote the following:

“It’s been a strange time to start a new role, however, I have received a warm Russellian welcome and I am very excited about the work ahead of me. I can’t wait to welcome as many of you back to the campus as soon as we’re able. In the meanwhile, if you would like to get in contact, please do drop me an email on [vdeadmangatt@royalrussell.co.uk](mailto:vdeadmangatt@royalrussell.co.uk).”



Victoria has also recorded a Youtube video which can be access by clicking [here](#)

# BALLARDS - A MEMORY

By Peter Martin (at RRS 1946 - 51)

Nostalgia is a two edged sword, frustrating to the speaker when a name or date is on the tip of one's tongue & boring to those listening to events or of people beyond their ken. So you have been warned.

I was the oddball from the beginning as I was one of a few scholarship pupils with two parents, my father was manager of Noel Brothers, Marble Arch branch at that time having been released from "Directed Labour" war work soon after VE day. John Blake was another of the anomalies. At this time the school roll was about 100 boys.

On arrival I became a Cypher - Welcome Cambridge 8. My sobriety was "Spook" or "Le Revenant" (a title I still use) due to my wearing steel rimmed spectacles & I encountered bullies for the first time. An example perpetrated on us new boys was done at the dining table by a large knee forcing a jam pot lid into the back of one's hand. Nor was I the one tied to a post up by the pavilion, a waste bin put over my head, & then bombarded with rock hard snowballs. I am glad to say there was much less by the time I left in 1951.

The period of which I reminisce starts on a cold winter's day in January 1946 with snow on the ground. The end of the Second World War was fresh in our minds at this time with rationing in full swing, in fact further rationing was to be introduced. When bread rationing came in, shant was told we could no longer have bread with our lunch if we had cake in the afternoon. This statement was greeted with uproar of a volume such that the demise of the lunchtime bread never occurred. Under the circumstances the catering left much to be desired & a block of fishpaste, fish not being rationed, frequently appeared on the tables. Hardboiled eggs for the evening meal usually seemed to occur on "Film Nights" which stank the cinema out as some gobbled their way through rejected eggs. The fried breakfast eggs were glazed from the oven as they were baked not fried & peeled in layers. But we were always hungry in those days.

At this time "TUM TUM" Madden was headmaster, Crispin Smith Deputy Head & Oxford House Tomlinson Known for some reason, but not where he could hear, as "Trip" was Cambridge House Master, but used to organize all the "on stage" drama as well. He favored an old plimsoll to administer his justice. He was a good artist & author. One of his books was on how to swim written in Latin with watercolour illustrations called "Elementa Nartandi" if I remember correctly. He taught a good many of us to swim and to gain our "Lifesaver" certificate. Carrick Smith taught French, "Lanky" Wright Art, Woodwork and A.C.F. "Gaffer" Paine Music and Form 1 always wore a starched dress shirt & bowtie. Paraded with A.C.F. as a Captain in WW1 Uniform.

The science master Flett was a fiery Welshman who did not last long after, in a very loud voice heard by most of the school, he told the headmaster that he was, and I quote, "As much use as a fart on a curtain rod." We did not have science for a while until he was replaced the next term. Our most exciting demonstration in the science lab was splitting water into its component gases by use of an electric current. The result is two glass columns one of Hydrogen & one of Oxygen. The trick is to open the valves at the top & ignite the gas. The bit of the experiment which was missed on this occasion was to purge the columns before lighting. The resulting explosion was ear shattering & left glass embedded in the ceiling. Turning gases back into water is exciting stuff.

# BALLARDS - A MEMORY

Other teachers came & went and I do not remember their names but do remember the effects some of them had on me. One teacher from I think India teaching maths always spoke literally and his phrase when dealing with currency was as written :- Pounds 100 or Dollars 100 all as printed as opposed to the normal 100 pounds we are used to. Another teacher resided in the lower Cambridge Masters room and of a Sunday morning after chapel introduced whoever wanted to listen to the realms of classical music on his HiFi and gave me my love of it to this day.

Matron was famous for shouting "Stop running you boys" at boys, mainly in the cloisters. When we stopped she would then say "Run along you boys". The world is a confusing place.

One thing most of us learned early on was to join everything going!! To facilitate getting out of shant and missing prep as much as possible.

The Cadet force was compulsory so no messing about get a stripe & enjoy weekends at camp and shooting on Bisley ranges. We were only about 12 when we discovered the "kick" of a 303 rifle. On one occasion a boy, whose name fails me, was not as tall as the rifle he was firing & slid backwards over a foot when he fired. The regular soldier in charge of us at the butts stood behind his feet so he could not go backwards as he fired. The result was heavy bruising on his shoulder. O for the days before they invented "Health & Safety".

Which reminds me we did miss bread at one lunch because one of the boys from St. Andrews House got his hand in the bread slicer & lost parts of three fingers. This led to pupils being banned from the kitchen.

I joined the Library Committee and was Secretary when HRH Princess Elizabeth, now of course our Sovereign Queen, visited the school and cut the first sod on the proposed extension. This committee went to the "Times Book Expedition" each year and when I was on it an OR paid for a "cream tea" at the Cumberland Hotel at Marble Arch.

The Shakespeare Society was another one to join as 4 times a year we went to the production put on by the Purley Amateur dramatic society at the theatre by the "Swan & Sugarloaf" in Purley.

At that time one of my more painful memories is picking up verruca's in both feet from, supposedly, the swimming pool in the woods. I was taken to Purley hospital where they were burnt out by a hot wire machine. But I think I overdosed on X-rays as the nurse demonstrated the machine for several minutes. For the next two weeks I had to walk on the sides of my feet. I was not popular in the clothing store as I ruined a good pair of shoes doing so. Another memory which I shudder at is the roll call after Wednesday lunch for the dentist visit in the afternoon and his foot pedal driven drill.

As an all-boys school, as it was then, we were educated in a vacuum, which I am glad to say now with both schools on the same site no longer exists. We did not learn to exist with the other half of the world. We in the main only met these strange things called "girls" after we left & became at their mercy. In I believe 1949 there was a dance organized at Ballards where 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> formers from Russell were invited. I fear it must not have been a success as it was not repeated in my time at shant. Another non repeat was the "sex education talk given to the fifth forms in the Great Hall as most of us left school ignorant of the facts of life. At that time even some books were banned and not just by the Lord Chamberlain's Office.

I was one of the little fairies in "Iolanthe". One of the priests in "St. Joan" and strutted the stage as a bit player in several of Shakespeare's delights. I still have the book of Shakespeare I received as top of form 5B in my last year of shant. My claim to fame was on speech day 1949 when the school orchestra was entertaining the visitors as with a bang the "D" string on my violin snapped and the orchestra lost its sync for a while.

# BALLARDS - A MEMORY

Old timers like myself may remember the school mascot saga of “Tip” the dog. Tip was a stray dog that wandered onto the site and stayed much to our delight. He was a liver & white terrier. Unfortunately he was considered a nuisance, probably as he did not obey authority, the then estate steward shot at him with a 12 bore shotgun. Luckily he was only slightly wounded. The steward was howled at and booed by all the school and had to take Tip to the vet for care and attention. On healing, Tip was returned to the school and became our mascot until he disappeared over Christmas one year.

Many of us, in our last year, appreciated our predecessors who came back to tell us of the world of gainful employment and explain their jobs so as to give us ideas for our futures. I joined GPO Telecoms, enjoyed my career and retired early in 1992 as a BT manager. It is my intention to receive more in pension than I received working, as my mother was 102 when she died I have a fighting chance .

Having become an “OR” in 1951, 70 years later I look back on my time at shant with affection and some of the people I met such as “doofer” Clarke from the West Country & “Taffy” Jones from Denbigh but not those expelled. As my memory fades I lose the names but what I learnt in my time at Ballards was the past cannot be changed but we can learn from it and not make the same mistake twice.

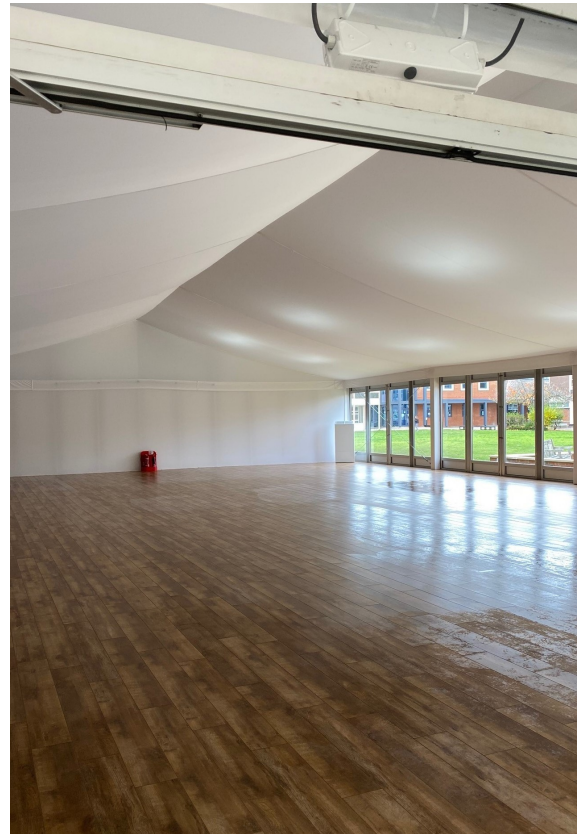
I hope the next Cambridge 8 found the hidden shelves I built in our lockless “locker” for contraband and privacy.

# ROYAL RUSSELL PROJECTS



Queens and Hollenden House have now relocated to the new boarding house adjacent to Lime Tree Quad. The new boarding house is also the home for the Health and Wellbeing centre which has relocated from the old sanatorium building by the Junior School.

# ROYAL RUSSELL PROJECTS



Towards the end of 2020, a marquee was erected for dining purposes so that all pupils could have a hot lunch whilst social distancing. It is currently used for pupils in both the Junior School and Senior School as well as staff.



The new Science block is now in full use by pupils who are taking advantage of the state of the art facilities it provides.

# REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY



On Remembrance Sunday a service was held in the Chapel and afterwards in the beautiful Memorial Garden in Chapel Quad to commemorate Old Russellians who died serving their country. Following a short service with a small number of representatives of the School and CCF, A wreath was laid on behalf of the Old Russellians by Rob Fisher and further wreaths were laid on behalf of the CCF and the School. The occasion was significantly lifted by the brilliant bugle playing of the 'Last Post' and 'Reveille' by Sam Stealey and some wonderful solo singing from Adam Court, Ophelia Humphreys-Elvis and Mr Bell with accompaniment from Mr Ford. Thank you to all of the CCF Cadets and Officers who were on parade to make this such a special commemoration.





# CONDOLENCES

## Mary Goodling

Mary worked at the school for nearly 25 years, eventually becoming supervisor of the cleaning staff. She had a wonderful smile and personality and was very popular with her staff. Mary retired just a few years ago but sadly lost her battle with COVID-19 earlier in the year.

## Mark Grineaux (At RRS 1960 - 1970)

Mark died suddenly but peacefully on the 18th August 2020. He will be sorely missed by everyone that knew him.



## Martin Bithell (At RRS 1952 - 1965)

Martin passed away on Thursday 4 June 2020 following a short illness. He was a beloved father to Cathy and brother to Frank. He will be greatly missed by his friends and family.

## David Armour

David passed away in the later part of 2020. His funeral was held on Wednesday 7 October.

## Geoff Hide 1936 - 2020 (At RRS 1946 - 1954)

Geoff wrote about his time at Royal Russell School, an extract of which can be found below, and this can be read on the Royal Russell School website [here](#)

As my father, John William Hide, a draper, was killed in the Second World War, I was eligible to go as a founder to the Warehouse men, Clerks and Drapers School (WC&DS), a charitable foundation. Walter alerted my mother to this school in an article in the *Draper's Record*, and after an interview with Mr. Buckland, a draper in Andover, I went in 1946 to Russell Hill School in Purley, the girls and junior departments. Then, when 11 years of age, I transferred to Russell School (Ballards) near Addington, the boy's school...

## Lynn Smith (nee Walker) At RRS 1971 - 1979

It is with our deepest sorrow that we inform you of the death of our younger sister Lynn Smith (nee Walker) at the tender age of only 59. Lynn was diagnosed with Acute lymphoblastic Leukaemia in May 2020 and fought her illness with bravery and tenacity. She was given the all clear but then caught Covid, which again she fought with her single usual stubbornness. Unfortunately she then succumbed to pneumonia and passed away on February 25<sup>th</sup> 2021 surrounded by her family.

Lynn was married to Jim and had four children and 5 grandchildren. She will be sorely missed by all those who knew her.



Suzanne Hale (nee Walker) and Tony Walker

# CONDOLENCES

## Homaa Khan 1960 - 2020 (At RRS 1972 - 1978)

My beautiful sister Homaa was born in London but spent her idyllic childhood in Kenya. Our father was a doctor and he founded the children's hospital in Nairobi and this is where Homaa developed a keen interest in Medicine as she would often join her father for ward rounds in the evenings. The sunny climate was ideal for growing up and we had 3 dogs who kept us entertained. As Homaa grew into her teenage years my parents realised they wanted her to have an English education and wanted to send her to a boarding school.

A family friend's children went to Royal Russell and it was decided to send my elder brother Jehangir and Homaa to join them in the early 70s. Boarding school was a shock but Homaa quickly established herself with a wide circle of close friends. Amongst others these were Carolyn Saulter, Jane Turtle, Julia Solomon, Julie Horrocks, Sian Holt, Virginia Jealous and Shirley Birchall. She loved her patched flared jeans and the school dances but actually worked quite hard achieving 13 O levels and the Snelgrove Prize for English.



Left to right: Aflaq, Homaa and Jehangir

Homaa left Royal Russell to study A levels at in Brighton. She went on to study Dentistry and then Medicine in London qualifying as a doctor in the late 80s. She moved to a flat in Knightsbridge where she developed a wide circle of friends. Always engaging and humorous she was often in the newspapers and magazines mixing with celebrities of the day. She also developed a close friendship with her cousin Imran Khan and was instrumental in raising funds for his cancer hospital in Pakistan hosting large fundraising parties in London.

Homaa went on to marry and had 2 beautiful children, Aaliya and Maxi. She spent 25 years as the GP partner in Godstone and developed close relationships with many of her patients. She was a fantastic doctor and her caring nature meant she went the extra mile. Homaa never lost her love for the London life and retained many of her close friendships from her youth and was a regular at Ascot and The Chelsea flower show. Her friends were from different ages and professions and this was one of her most amazing attributes that she always felt she was your best friend.

Homaa is deeply missed by family and friends. She was the most amazing mother, wife, sister and friend and we are grateful to have shared so many memorable experiences with her. She was a remarkable person whose life was shone so brightly. Her laughter will stay with us forever.

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## Peter H Batchen 1 January 1925 – 31 March 2021

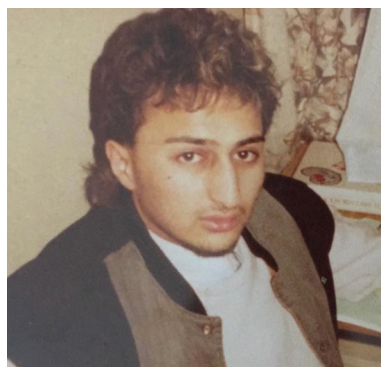
Peter studied at The Russell School from around 1935 to 1940, when the Headmaster was Mr Madden MA (Oxon). He sang in the school chapel choir and learned violin – at 30 shillings a lesson!

In around the 1940's, the girls transferred to Russell School, and together they learned to dance. A great memory for Peter.

September 1940 meant change of schools, and Peter joined King Edward's School in Birmingham after a fabulous time at the Russell School.

# CONDOLENCES

## Arif Ebrahim (At RRS 1981 - 1984)



Rest In Peace, Arif Ebrahim, whom we lost on January 4th 2021 after three weeks in a Johannesburg ICU. An Old Russellian of rare distinction, father, husband, entrepreneur and the best cricketer - internationally decorated; East, and Central Africa, and Zambia - that almost all of us will have the privilege of playing alongside. Also a mean footballer, when Andrew Foot allowed him to risk what he would affectionately call his "little bones".



Small in stature, but, at the crease and in life, towering. As Michael Clarke said of Phil Hughes, rest in peace our little brother, we'll see you up there out in the middle.

## Colin Barrett - Oxford House Tutor and Teacher of English (At RRS 2001 - 2014)

Colin was a fantastic English teacher who took a special interest in the students, particularly those who struggled or were disadvantaged. He started an English lunchtime club which was really popular with one group of boys in particular, reading, having very lively discussions and exploring drama. This culminated in a memorable performance of 'Macbeth' with great enthusiasm and increasingly spontaneous new interpretations of the events, including multiple murders, all under the Chapel. Many of these students maintained this enthusiasm all the way to studying Literature for A level, and beyond. Colin was also really happy to help students outside the English department in creative ways even to the point of being filmed eating a yoghurt, in a funny and slightly seductive way for part of an AS student's Media Studies coursework.



Colin with Steve Greaves

Colin was also a tutor in Oxford house under the leadership of housemaster Steve Greaves. He was a great supporter of the house and a popular presence when he came back, after retirement, for the annual Old Russellian's football day. With his soft, dry sense of humour Colin was a wonderfully calm presence in the house. He always endeavoured to bring a little culture to the boys with his literary quotes and the playing of his acoustic guitar in the lobby or under the brick arches to the quad. After his retirement from teaching, Colin continued to support Steve in Oxford house as the resident weekend duty teacher. As teaching staff arrived for work on Monday morning, Colin would stay for a short chat and then return home until the following weekend.

Colin was a professional with high ideals, he didn't always approve of everything the school did but was happy to participate and do anything that was of value to the pupils or staff or that simply appealed to his sense of humour. He was supportive of colleagues and was also a good friend to many of them. You could see Colin's fondness for the school, staff and students when he came back to judge poetry competitions, support charity events or cheer on the footballers, however cold the touchline. He really was a true Russellian!

# CORRESPONDENCE

Thank you for the email and for putting together the newsletter. It is always heart warming to read about our school (fond memories).

I sincerely hope yourself and all the members of the school are keeping well during these testing times.

Kind regards, Kunwar

Good morning from Tokyo.

Thank you so much for the Newsletter.

Have a lovely day and weekend.

Kind regards

Makoto

Thanks for the OR newsletter. I was interested to see the report on the cadet corp.

In it's infancy I remember 'lanky' Wright was in charge. He was art master and in charge of St Andrews house. now demolished. I recall clearly a group of us -a dozen or so. On parade in the courtyard of St Andrews on parade and ready for inspection by Princess Elizabeth on her first visit to the school. She inspected the troops and was taken inside for tea?. I think we were reasonably excited to see a real live princess. My reason for writing to you is to ask if there is any photo. Or record of that visit or indeed if you know of any others still alive who remember her visit.

Kind regards, Graham Robinson

Thank you very much for the newspaper articles. My grandfather, Arthur 'Pot' Williams started life as a street market messenger boy in Liverpool; he became a wealthy property owner and, so I was told, supported a fund raising effort on behalf of the School. Quite what he had to do with Warehousemen or Drapers, I do not know.

My father was spoilt, very well privately educated, charming, a gambler and drank for Britain in WW2 - rags to riches and back to rags in three generations! My parents were divorced when I was about 10; my elder brother and sister finished their private boarding school education. The divorce legislation was distinctly different and the financial tap was turned off as far as my schooling was concerned.

A friend of the family knew of my grandfather's efforts on behalf of RRS, and suggested it might be a possibility for me. I had been a boarder since I was 4; I was offered the choice of a day grammar school in Chester or this boarding school in Surrey; my mother and I visited, and I chose Ballards.

I look back on my days there with great affection; in the '50s, with a middle class accent, my nickname was 'My Lord' with little or no animosity attached. I am told the fee paid by my mother was £32 per term or year, I'm not sure which. The education I had, mimicked in all aspects a public school's and certainly did me proud, I am very grateful. No wonder things were coming to a financial head.

Stewart Williams

We hope you enjoyed reading the newsletter. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to its contents. If you would like to write about your time at Royal Russell or your time following Royal Russell (or both) or have any photos/archives please email [vrees@royalrussell.co.uk](mailto:vrees@royalrussell.co.uk).