

# 2023 Report of the Membership Secretary to the AGM (Draft)

For Saturday 11 November 2023

Greeting all. I have please in presenting my 7<sup>th</sup> MemSec report for 2023

**First off thanks** (better to do this at the beginning in case my memory fades)

At the outset, I would place on record my thanks to Lauren Bayliss-Fuller and Katie Gould They have been a source of great support throughout my time as MemSec – forever on hand, at the end of the phone, to give advice and answer the most obvious questions! Two diplomatic and enthusiastic colleagues who always endeavour and succeed in bringing the RHSA and School community closer together.

Also, I am indebted to the technical support I receive from InTouch the organisation that manages our data. Thanks to Chris, Carol, and Simon at the InTouch offices.

In addition, my colleagues on the GC deserve recognition – Monty Callow, Nick Gill, Aimee Frankham and Stephen Traynor. We have continued to work closely with the school to ensure things haven't just stood still.

My continued thanks go to Claire Waugh, Howard Redwood and Brian Gatward for all their work as volunteers with the Heritage Centre and digitalising the Admission Books. This has been and remains very time-consuming work and is really appreciated.

Also, thanks to all the work of Maggie Good in assisting with the input of historical data onto InTouch and being a critical friend; and to the Suffolk Vicar who prays for us all!

And finally, a thanks to all those members who are actively engaged at whatever age in supporting the work of the RHSA, the School and the Foundation.

I am very well supported in my role by all these people.

I also feel that we need more members actively supporting the work of the GC and would ask interested persons, who could spare the time and irrespective of age, to put themselves forward.

I am happy to answer members' questions during the AGM or via email after the meeting.

Mark (mlucas@royalhospitalschool.org or mark@thelucasfamily.karoo.co.uk)

Thank you

The Membership Secretary is responsible for:

## **1. Developing and implementing a membership strategy.**

All ex-students automatically become Life Members of the RHSA when they leave the school, irrelevant of their year of leaving. Their basic data is transferred during the summer and undertaken by Lauren Bayliss-Fuller and Katie Gould.

Exceptionally someone may write to state they do not want to be a member. If this happens then their data would remain on the InTouch database, but the person would

have not contact from the RHSA or the Development Office (InTouch is the database that we use for keeping membership records).  
Their wishes are fully respected.

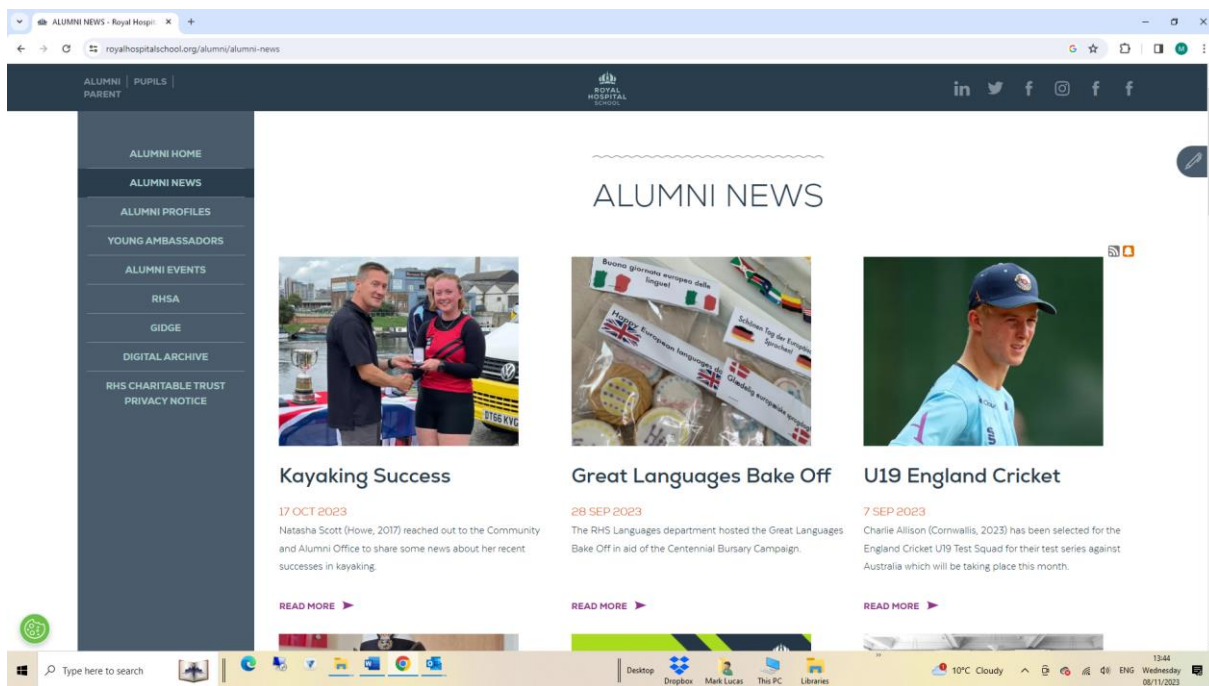
## Keeping in touch

This year I have taken an opportunity to highlight the work of three forums (fora). All help to maintain good communication between the school, the RHSA and importantly the membership. Not everyone uses Facebook, but many do, and it is a great way to share memories and photos. I know from talking to friends that WhatsApp groups abound, along with X, Instagram and TikTok. Those early days of Friends Reunited are well behind us but there is much to keep us in touch as an association.

I hope you enjoy the articles of John and Nigel. My thanks to them for their ongoing contribution to our community.

## Royal Hospital School Alumni page

<https://www.royalhospitalschool.org/alumni/alumni-news>



This admin for this site is undertaken by Katie Gould and Lauran Bayliss-Fuller. It exists for the benefit of all RHSA Alumni and has various links to resources that members will find of interest, including upcoming events, back copies of "The Gidge" and access to the Digital archive. You'd like to visit the school? Then contact Katie or Lauren.

The page also has a link where you can update your contact details.

Please look for yourself. Our thanks for this work must go to Katie and Lauran for their ongoing support to the Alumni.

## **Nigel Price writes about “The RHS Arms” .....**

The Arms, as it's often referred to, is a Facebook group that was set up for former pupils and staff of the Royal Hospital School. It's background is that it was born out of frustration with overzealous control on previous bulletin boards and groups that had formed. A group of people were approached to be admins, of which I was one, and on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2010 the group was born. It quickly gathered pace and became a popular site with many memories and photos shared to the group. The group is independent of both the school and the RHSA but we do try and maintain standards of responsibility and decency although some events have made this challenging!

Currently we stand it 1728 members with 1319 being active by joining in with views, comments and posts! The age range covers new leavers right up to folk in their 90's and 22% of our members are woman and that group is growing. I'm pleased to say we have a number of former staff in the group. The membership also spans the globe with members literally all over the world.

The group was set up to bring people together, keep people in contact and support anyone that needed it. The unique nature of the school has meant that people in vastly different circumstances and age groups have a shared bond and this shows within the group. I daresay we all have friends who just cannot understand this incredible bond.

The current admins are Andrew Pope, Becka Spencer, Alex Hill and me Nigel Price. We've all been involved since the start of the group along with several others who have stood down over time but who all contributed greatly to the group and still do. Issues? We've had our moments! Upsets over what someone can say, court cases, 'marmite' characters and deaths have all caused admins and others some grief but generally things get sorted out.

Where this group goes over time will be determined by it's contributors. At the outset, for many, it was a way to reconnect with old mates from school having lost touch over the years. Modern life now means many folk no longer lose contact after leaving due to email, mobiles insta etc., but the group gives an insight to the past and how it was for different eras. A lot of us older members are keen to hear from our lady members about how they found the place and what day to day life is like now, likewise from the gentlemen!! So if you're reading this please don't be shy, post anonymously if you wish but please post and keep it all going!!

Nigel Price  
Hood 1968 – 73  
November 2023

## **John Wood writes about “The Golden Years” .....**

I created the 'The Golden Years' Facebook page thirteen years ago in the hope that those of a certain age would feel comfortable in regaining contact within a collective atmosphere familiar to themselves. I felt there needed to be a separation between the old school and the more modern one so that subjects pertaining to a more austere time wouldn't conflict with those who have experienced the more moderate modern environment.

The Golden Years now encompasses a membership of nearly 800 ex-pupils who went to the school from the early 1950s to the early 1990s.

The original purpose of the group was merely to help regain contact and to form renewed friendships in today's world. The group has since developed into a mutual appreciative environment for the reminiscence of our times together as pupils as well as an appreciation of the history and heritage that led to us being able to enjoy our time at the school. I do believe that many of the group's members have enjoyed the opportunity to reignite old friendships and have benefitted from doing so too.

My background after leaving the school has revolved around archaeology and history, and therefore the history of the school has been of a particular interest to me. I have hoped that my research, alongside others, has helped illuminate the minds of ex-pupils within this fascinating subject.

The school has a unique and complex history. Its origins lie in three comparable charity schools that later combined as one. The Greenwich Hospital School, the Royal Naval Asylum, and the Boreman Foundation, all of which later became the Royal Hospital School.

The late Bernard de Neumann systematically researched and curated the legacy of the school's past, which I have hoped to continue. There is much more to research and investigate especially as more information is coming to light with the digitalisation of the school's archive. The valiant work by those undertaking this project, at the school, will provide an invaluable resource to many for the years to come.

Many histories of the school have been written and rewritten from other histories, it is always important when studying history to seek original sources as otherwise rewriting another's work fall foul of their misunderstandings or mistakes. Bernard de Neumann had hoped to rework the history of the school basing his understanding from source material rather than basing his work on the known written history.

The school has an established list of renown alumni, though I suspect there are a greater number than we might first think. The present headmaster, Simon Lockyer, commented on local radio, a few years ago, that unlike pupils of the past, today's pupils aren't required to join the Navy. This requirement to join the Navy is perhaps more a myth than anything else born by the notion that the RHS was the 'Cradle of the Navy', which was coined as a hope rather than an actuality. The RHS has never really been a cradle for the Navy, and for much of its history the lion's share of leavers went into a civilian occupation. Indeed, pupils were entered into the school with the proviso that they then went into the Navy, but that was dependent on whether the Navy wanted them. There have been, in the past, varying reasons why RHS boys haven't been accepted into the Navy and often very few were accepted. Throughout most the 19th Century less than 20% of leavers entered the Royal Navy, it was only at the end of that century that the numbers improved significantly, primarily due to an improved diet offered by the school, whereas prior to this most failed to join the Navy on medical grounds.

Between 1859 and 1866 a total of 1558 boys were discharged from the school of which, 353 joined the Navy, 130 joined the dockyards, 32 joined the Coast Guards, 36 joined the Royal

Marines, 146 joined the Merchant Marine, 82 had been expelled, 16 had died with 713 'sent to friends' meaning they left for a civilian occupation.

Whilst during this period the pupils weren't taught a broad curriculum, as was the case in later years, they were however taught Navigation to a high level. To learn Navigation, it was necessary to have a good grounding of mathematics and so the Greenwich pupils of this time had a higher-than-average mathematics education compared to most school pupils across the country. Mathematics was a valuable qualification for many occupations outside Navigation and so RHS boys were readily sought by the civilian sector. It was the height of the Industrial Revolution and so many ex-pupils are likely to have entered occupations that relied heavily on mathematics such as engineering architecture, and civil architecture. So, whilst some of the RHS Old Boys in the Navy and were charting the Empire, others were constructing its infrastructure too.

So, there is a great breadth of RHS Old Boys who found a life away from the Navy, and it might be prudent to wonder what they did and whether any of them, unknown by us, gained merit or achievement presently unrecognised by the school. I hope to research some of these ex-pupils to discover what became of them, and if they contributed to the country in a manner that at present, we aren't aware.

I think it might be an invaluable exercise for the pupils if they too were able to use the archive material to discover not only the history of the school itself but also how its leavers made a mark on the future of Britain, perhaps to discover marvels yet known.

John Wood  
Blake 1975-81  
November 2023

A list of Social Media sites is listed on the next 2 pages. Please let me know of any inaccuracies or additions.

# RHS & RHTA social media – 2023

<b>Social media groups</b> Search using the emboldened title	Admin
<b>Royal Hospital School Alumni page</b> <a href="https://www.royalhospitalschool.org/alumni/alumni-news">https://www.royalhospitalschool.org/alumni/alumni-news</a>	Lauren Bayliss-Fuller Katie Gould
<b>Royal Hospital School Careers Network</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/royal-hospital-school-careers-network-71839b60/">https://www.linkedin.com/in/royal-hospital-school-careers-network-71839b60/</a>	Lauren Bayliss-Fuller Katie Gould
<b>RHTA GC Notices</b> "In the spirit of the new GC and moving forwards with effective communications with former pupils of RHS, we the GC have decided to become FB members as a direct route of keeping in contact with everyone. Please feel free to PM any queries or requests. Thanks, and look forward to hearing from you all". <a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/407451282711623/?ref=group_header">https://www.facebook.com/groups/407451282711623/?ref=group_header</a>	Stephen Traynor Ian Rockett
<b>Royal Hospital School Association</b> "To reunite old friends, maintain connections with the school and encourage professional networking, career progression and advice". Search: <b>Royal-Hospital School-Association</b>	Aimee Frankham
<b>RHS Digital Archive</b> (not FaceBook but a website) Visit the website <a href="http://rhsarchives.daisy.websds.net/">http://rhsarchives.daisy.websds.net/</a> Archive access is available on request. A username and password are required.	Lauren Bayliss-Fuller Katie Gould
<b>The RHS Arms</b> The forum for all ex-Royal Hospital School pupils. "Welcome to the home of ex RHS pupils and staff on Facebook. The aim of this group is to promote friendship and co-operation between those that in some way, shape or form were touched by the Royal Hospital School. We are a closed Group and would ask that you allow a member of the admin team to message you in order to confirm your relationship with RHS when applying to join. No confirmation means no entry I'm afraid".	Matt Hall Nigel Price Matt Ralph
<b>RHS ~ The Golden Years</b> "A group for those who attended RHS during the 1950-80s."	John R G Wood
<b>RHTA Southern Counties Branch</b> – (closed group 195 members) <i>"Aims to promote a fun, friendly, all-inclusive RHTA family on the South Coast and inland Southern Counties".</i>	Nick Gill, Jez Gaskin Jonathon Rivenberg
<b>RHTA East Anglian Branch</b> <i>"A group for members of the RHTA, particularly the East Anglian Branch, to keep in touch and discuss upcoming events and ideas. This is a closed group and members wishing to join will need to be approved by the Admin team. We will try our best to do this ASAP.</i>	Alan Myers Maggie Good Ruth Page
<b>The RHS Arms Public Bar</b> <i>"Members wishing to join will need to be approved by the admin team. Not for the faint hearted. "No moaning and threatening to leave"</i>	Jason Ricketts John Baker Andy Morgan
<b>Royal Hospital School (born 1st January 1945 to 31st December 1951)</b> – (closed group 89 members)	Mark Lucas
<b>RHS Old Boys (born 1st January 1952 to 31st December 1954)</b>	Mark Lucas

<b>RHS class of 1967</b> <i>"Established in November 2014 to reconnect old friends primarily from the 1966 – 68 intake years)</i>	Mark Lucas
<b>RHS Old boys (1972-74 starters)</b>	Mark Lucas Rich Lancaster
<b>RHS '74 intake</b>	Ted Edwards
<b>Royal Hospital School - Early 80's Leavers</b>	Mark Lucas Richard Cantelo Mark Seaman
<b>Royal Hospital School Class of '83</b>	Richard Cantelo
<b>RHS Old Boys Rugby</b>	Richard Cantelo Jack Cantelo Harry Chadwick
<b>Cornwallis - The Golden Years 1960 - 1975</b>	Mark Lucas
<b>Hood House FB Group</b>	Brian Burton Nigel Price
<b>Drake House</b>	Mark Lucas
<b>RHSA - Down Under Alumni (Australia and New Zealand)</b>	Mark Lucas
<b>RHSA Camusa (Canada, Mexico and USA)</b>	Mark Lucas
<b>St Vincent House Alumni</b>	Mark Lucas
<b>Royal Hospital School Careers Network</b> <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/in/royal-hospital-school-careers-network-71839b60/">https://www.linkedin.com/in/royal-hospital-school-careers-network-71839b60/</a>	Lucy Pembroke Simon Marsh
<b>Royal Hospital School Sailing Academy</b>	
<b>Royal Hospital School Alumni Yacht Club</b>	Mick O'Connor Anthony Alsford
<b>Royal Hospital School celebrates Devizes to Westminster</b>	

## Ad hoc items

### Holbrook Neighbourhood Plan 2022 – 2037

I've included this item for members so you can see what the plans are for the area, and in particular the Royal Hospital School options. See HNPO4 pages 43 – 46. It makes for interesting reading and can be downloaded here:

<https://www.babergh.gov.uk/documents/d/babergh/holbrook-np-referendum-version->

Voting on this draft version is on 21 November.

## The Ronnie Richards Memorial Charity

A very worthwhile cause that has been led by Paul Williams (Nelson 1967) is the RRMCC. Paul is unable to be here for the reunion weekend because he is busy working on the highly successful closely linked public access defibrillator (PAD) program that he created 15 years ago in Cornwall. A truly lifesaving project. Read about it here.

RRMC website : [www.rrmc.life](http://www.rrmc.life)

## Painting by Jack Russell

Earlier this year Andrew Redwood was contacted by Simon Lockyer

A couple of years ago (2018) Jack Russell came and painted the school. His paintings were at the Chris Beetles Gallery in London during the summer. He has, however, offered us the option of first refusal should a member of the school community be interested in this original painting. If this is something that you think you or a member of the RHSA might be interested in acquiring then please let me know as soon as possible.

The painting was suggested to Jack by Don Topley (ex RHSS, ex Essex CCC). Being probably the most famous cricketer to be produced at the school you'll see that he painted in the very tall Reece Topley bowling. Don then very kindly rallied the school and for a period the school sold a good number of prints to ex pupils with a £100 per print sold going to school funds. Now the original is for sale.



I have been in contact with Jack Russell during the summer who has been kind to keep the painting at his studio until he knows what interest there is from the school or the RHSA. Jack is very keen for the painting to go to somebody (or somebodies) connected to the school or the school itself.



This could be purchased by an individual – anyone interested would need to contact Jack to discuss the price.

Or

It could be purchased by a group of sponsors (alumni or parents); or sold at an auction at a school event.

One thing Jack confirm is that whoever purchases the painting they would be very welcome to his private studio (not open to the public) here in South Gloucestershire to collect their picture, or indeed he would be very happy to deliver it to them in person. Each of Jack's original paintings comes with a handwritten note from him, personally, to the buyer for provenance.

## 2. Keeping the membership records up to date.

This is undertaken on a regular basis when information comes to light. I frequently receive emails addressed to "memsec"; or information via the RHSA FB site; the GC team share updates between us; I get details passed on by word and mouth. The Development Office also regularly up-date records. On-line booking for events also helps InTouch records to be updated.

The Gidge" also helps to keep young and old alike informed and in touch with the RHSA and Development Office. You can get your online copy at:

<https://www.royalhospitalschool.org/alumni/alumni-news>

A reminder every member of the Alumni can update their own details on the Alumni page: Go to <https://www.royalhospitalschool.org/alumni> and scroll down to the green tab

**"UPDATE MY DETAILS"**

**Recent demises** are recorded in the accompanying word document. Since my last report the death of 114 RHSA Alumni have been recorded

12 in 2023

5 in 2022

3 in 2021

2 in 2020

2 in 2019

4 in 2018

The remaining 86 are pre - 2017 and range from 1942 – 2017.

Since 2016 over 3640 RHSA Alumni deaths have been recorded.

Sometimes when a notification of a death comes it is accompanied by an obituary such as a recent example from Paul Greenwood of the death of his brother. It gives us a flavour of the life of one old boy. So many now overseas.

*"Peter Roy Greenwood. 29 September 1952 - 4 August 2023*

*Anson House 65-69*

*Peter left RHS to be a printer at Richard Clays in Bungay, Suffolk. After his apprenticeship he emigrated to South Africa and worked at the Morning Star in Johannesburg. After a few years he went to work for De Beers and was sent to a new mine in Botswana where he stayed for a few years. He and a couple of friends then started their own company where they oversaw the contracts for aluminium smelting works.*

*He worked in S.A. then Mozambique before landing contracts in Qatar, Saudi Arabia, AEU, and Dubai before retiring and returning home due to ill health.  
Peter was a good golfer (at one point I think he had a 4 handicap) and fishermen especially fly fishing.  
He leaves a wife Ilona and two daughters Laura and Jen."*

### **Continued action for the future:**

Keeping the membership records up to date is an important ongoing job and so I will continue to be to use family history websites such as Ancestry, MyHeritage and other sources to try and trace and record data of former students (deceased or living).

A very recent example of this work comes to mind. I have been looing at those born in 1923, 1933 and 1943 who are 80, 90, or 100 years old this year. In the course of my tracing boys from 1943 I came across Richard Lentle (Anson) born 1943. We had no record of his time at the school other than his name, dob and house. After much searching, I traced him via Ancestry to a Roger Lentle who is a relative; then to Massey University in New Zealand. After several email enquiries I received this lovely reply.

*"Thank you for your email. It came as quite a blast from the past! I did indeed attend the RHS at quite a low point in my early life. My natural father was a lieutenant the RN and did not return from the war. Hence, I lived with my mum and grandma in a poor part of Nottingham. My mother married again (a CPO in the RN) and moved down to Gosport on the south coast of England whilst I was dispatched to RHS. Hence in a relatively short time I lost my father, mum and grandma, at least that's how it seemed to me. Naturally I was quite withdrawn and was seen as a ready victim and consistently picked on by other boys. One thing that came out of my relatively short stay at RHS was that my mother was told I was extremely bright and should go to grammar school. Hence, I moved down to Gosport Grammar school then on to University College London and had a successful academic career. The other learning was a realization that one could only depend on oneself in a bitter vicious world. Hence, I have mixed feelings about RHS but would nevertheless like to receive the newsletter.*

*Best regards*

*Dr Roger Lentle BSc MB BS PhD MRCS LRCP Emeritus Professor Massey University New Zealand"*

### **Finding members who we have lost contact with.**

As well as researching older records there has been a continued push to encourage participation via dedicated FB groups. There is no doubt that this can bring old friends together and enable memories, photos and posts to be shared. These groups always complement the official RHSA FB group.

Another recent example is that of Blake boys who started in 1969. Through the RHS Arms David Crane and Nick Mackie were able to gather most of their intake and met recently in Bristol. I was able to assist them find several, who were not on FaceBook, leaving only one person – Neale French still to be traced. Anyone know of his whereabouts?

The most recent dedicated FaceBook group is [St. Vincent House Alumni](#) currently with 190 members. It was used earlier this year to pass on the sad news of Brian Hawkins' death last December. I am always open to suggestions for other dedicated groups.

The official RHSA FB page attracts frequent queries and comments. I am grateful for to Aimee Frankham for following up on the many posts we receive. It is a useful resource for keeping in touch.

We continue to keep in touch with our very senior members but working with the student body and house parents and sending birthday cards for those reaching their 80<sup>th</sup>, 90<sup>th</sup> and 100<sup>th</sup> birthdays.

There are still many missing addresses for those born in the 1920s, 1930s and 1940s but we are doing our best to reach out to our older members.

### **Action for the future:**

1. Continuance of the removal of duplicates from the InTouch database. Updating inaccurate data entry
2. Continue promoting the use of the RHS digital archive <http://rhsarchives.daisy.websds.net/>

### **3. Conducting correspondence with regard to membership with Members and the School.**

This is covered by No 2 above 3.

### **4. Liaising with Branch General Secretaries regarding their members.**

- a. This is now a reduced part of my role and the work of the RHSA in general. Improved communications including email & social media – in particular, FaceBook and LinkedIn mean that members can keep in touch more easily and network.
- b. The intake of more recent members is now much more geographically dispersed so "branches" in the traditional sense tend not to operate. However, the Portsmouth Branch still retains a greater concentration of older former students and continues to operate. The Plymouth Branch is not very active – as long serving committee members retire – it has proved difficult to find younger people to attend and/or organise meetings and functions. The London/Southeast & East Anglian branches are thriving and utilise FB for helping to organise events and disseminate information.

### **5. Recruiting new members from the School and from ex-pupils of the School who are not currently Members.**

My understanding now is that all former students of the RHS are automatically members of the RHSA. However, someone occasionally slips through the net and doesn't appear on the database.

Mark Lucas  
November 2023