2024 Report of the Membership Secretary to the AGM (draft)

Saturday 9th November 2024

Greetings to all present and to all RHSA alumni across the world.

I have pleasure in presenting my 8th MemSec report for 2024, but it would be remiss of me of course if I didn't show my appreciation to those who help me do this job.

First off thanks to the Headteacher and our Alumni Office colleagues who run many regular events throughout the year in conjunction with the RHSA including; professional networking events; the Army vs Navy rugby match; Summer Reunion Weekend; Old Boys Rugby & Curry Night; year group reunions as well as informal gatherings and many more.

So thanks to Lauren Bayliss-Fuller, Katie Gould & Rebecca Kidger.

https://www.royalhospitalschool.org/alumni/alumni-events

They continue to be a source of great support throughout my time as MemSec – forever on hand, at the end of the phone, to give advice, chase me up, and answer the most obvious questions! Diplomatic and enthusiastic colleagues who always endeavour in bringing the RHSA and School community closer together.

Also, I place on record my appreciation to the technical team of InTouch. Thanks to Chris, Carol, and Simon.

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. His year we say good bye to Monty our Vice President who steps down from his role to pursue other commitments. We wish him well. (a poingnant cheerio for me as we were both in 1U together)

My continued thanks go to Claire Waugh, Howard Redwood and Brian Gatward for all their ongoing work as volunteers with the Heritage Centre and digitalising the Admission Books. And to John R G Wood 'RHS The Golden Years' and Nigel Price 'The RHS Arms' – both very active FaceBook groups.

Their time and that of other volunteers has been and remains very time-consuming their efforts are 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! Best wishes in your new job! 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**. It comes as a surprise to a some ex-students that they automatically become Life Members of the RHSA when they leave the

school, irrespective of their year of leaving. Basic data is transferred to InTouch – the database which is used and constantly updated with membership records. Some of what I do is updating the database with things like change of contact details; but also filling gaps where we have little information and of course recording demises.

I am able to utilise the data to assist alumni get in touch by acting as a sort of 'go between'.

I also use Ancestry, 192.com and My Heritage to help 'unearth' those were minimum records exist. I have even been asked in the past if I have worked for missing persons!

Ways to keep in touch

Members can be involved as little or as much as desired

- Receiving newsletters and The Gidge – always keep the office informed if you change your address. And if you have an interesting tale then why not submit you item to the editor of the Gidge.
- FaceBook. Many groups exists but the two largest are "The RHS Arms" and "The RHS Golden Years" – some exist for specific interest groups like rugby or sailing; or some are based in areas around the world. (A full list is attached).
- WhatsApp.
- TikTok.
- Instagram.
- LinkedIn – the careers network supports those wanting advice on career opportunities or want to help others.
- I you'd like to visit the school? Then contact the Alumni office. Former students are always welcome but just need s bit of advance warning.
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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 ourselves;
   - I get details passed on by word and mouth.
   - The Alumni 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.
   - Sometimes when a notification of a death comes it is accompanied by an obituary such as a recent example from David Franks on the death of his lifelong friend **Martin Barnes**. (Reproduced in full here). Thank you David for such a lovely memory.

"Martin.

I met Martin 48 years ago in 1976 when we were 11 years old, beginning our first term at RHS, the Royal Hospital School in Holbrook near Ipswich. RHS was a naval boarding school for the sons' of seafarers, Martin's dad John worked for Trinity House whilst mine was in the Royal Navy.

We soon became the best of mates and throughout our seven years at RHS we were in the same classes and played together in the school football teams. Martin was a talented footballer with a cultured left foot and the best tennis player in our year. He found schoolwork easy and particularly enjoyed geography and maths. In his final years at school he became a senior prefect despite receiving the cane for the heinous crime of throwing a ball of paper after lights out.

During the school holidays he would come and stay with me in Surrey and I would go to his house in Harwich. I recall travelling by train together from Harwich to Colchester in 1981 to watch the double bill of Chariots of Fire and Gregory's Girl.

As our time together at RHS drew to a close, we would spend endless hours playing on the grass tennis courts that were situated between our boarding houses, and we developed a gallows style humour about our future. I think this was due to the uncertainty of what we were about to embark on and the fact that we would be undertaking the next stage of our lives apart.

During a long post-school summer holiday together in the South of France, we received our A level results. Martin would be going to City of London University whilst I was off to Liverpool. We kept in touch and would meet up regularly and go skiing together. I was always a little jealous of Martin's cool dress sense and musical taste, he was Lloyd Cole and the Commotions, and the Smiths, whilst I was Chris Rea. After university we lived together for a while in London and this is where I introduced Martin to Sarah who he would later marry.

Martin and Sarah married in 1993 with their daughter Eleanor being born in 1996.

In the early 2000s Martin, Sarah and Eleanor had moved from London to Essex to be near their families, and as I lived in the West Country we did not see so much of each other but we kept in touch.

Martin's diagnosis of MND in late 2020 was a devastating blow for him and his loved ones, particularly with the COVID restrictions of the time. Martin lived with his sister Christine until he was able to find his own flat close to all of his family where carers could come and look after him, and eventually live in with him.

Martin said that up to the age of 50 he was really healthy and then his body gave up. The initial prognosis given to him was six months to live although I don't recall a time in the past few years of him feeling sorry for himself.

Martin had to go to the Specialist Respiratory Centre in Cambridge for regular check ups, and we had long talks on our drives to and from Papworth and whilst we were waiting there for his treatment and tests. He was fully aware of the severity of his illness but he never lost his optimism and positive outlook. The impression that I got was that he wasn't afraid of dying but was more concerned about the loved ones he would leave behind. He was keen for everyone to try and live their dreams and do all that they could with their lives.

Despite his condition he would still think of others more than himself. Whenever the subject of Rob Burrows came up, he would say how sorry he was for him and his family, and how unfair it was that they were suffering from this terrible illness despite having it himself. He felt so sorry for his South African carer Heather, who had not been able to return home for sometime and he was overjoyed when she was able to take a holiday and go back.

Martin developed a love to talk with anyone and everyone through his illness and charmed all he came across in this time. It was somewhat ironic that his verbal diarrhoea came at a time when he was forced to use a Nippy breathing machine which made it difficult to hear him, but this was solved when he was fitted with a nose only mask.

Motor Neurone Disease is a merciless condition that attacks not only the physical aspect of the sufferers, but also the mental side, as it reduces the individual's ability to carry out basic day to day personal functions. Despite having to have relative strangers wash, cloth, clean and feed him, Martin maintained his happy demeanour, mainly through talking. The amazing support that Martin received enabled him to continue working until the day before he died, which I know he was extremely grateful for.

Martin was extremely close to his family. He loved and was incredibly proud of his daughter Elli and thought the world of her. Martin described Christine as 'the best sister in the world', and was eternally grateful for all that Sarah did for him over the years.

The way he bore his illness with stoicism and good humour made it so much easier for all of those around him. I can't remember who said it but someone mentioned 'that unmistakeable Martin grin' which sums him up beautifully.

Rob Burrows' Doctor wrote about MND sufferers, 'If your patient's not really lovely, you have probably got the diagnosis wrong' which was just perfect for Martin.

Lyric from 'Some Fantastic Place' by Squeeze, Martin's favourite song,

'Her love was life and happiness

And in her steps I trace,

The way to live a better life

In some fantastic place.'

You will be missed Martin.

3. **Continue promoting the use http://rhsarchives.daisy.websds.net/ of the RHS digital archive**
4. **Conducting correspondence with regard to membership with Members and the School.**

In July I received an interesting letter from old boy Tim Redmond (Drake) highlighting the unusual case of Duncan Alexander Croall Scott-Ford

> *Tim writes*
> *"I was on holiday recently and reading a library book called "Hitler's British Traitors," by an author called Tim Tate. I was really surprised to read about this man called Duncan Alexander Croall Scott-Ford, who, as a merchant seaman, gave away information on convoys to the Germans; as a result ships were lost and a lot of sailors lost their lives. In the book it mentioned that Scott-Ford was born in Devonport, Plymouth in 1921. His father, who was a naval sick bay attendant, committed suicide when Duncan was 11. His mother then sent him in the care of the RN "as a boarder at the Greenwich training school in London." Being an ex-detective (!?) I immediately thought this must have been to RHS, just before it moved to Holbrook in 1933. Indeed it was because if you Google the man, there is a Wikipedia article on him, which is essentially a reproduction of his entry in the book. But the article does say he was at RHS between 1933 and 1937. I don't remember hearing about this man when I was at school, possibly for obvious reasons; I certainly don't recall him being on any of the honour boards! Scott-Ford's original family name was Smith; he changed it to improve his chances in life, which clearly didn't work. He eventually met Albert Pierrepoint, all be it briefly, in 1942. Did you know anything about this guy Mark? I'm certain the naval staff when we were there would have known of him because he was a contemporary of theirs. I'm in email contact with a small group of ex Drake boys, so I've contacted them. This includes Monty Callow, who used to be a master and housemaster (Collingwood) there; he's still involved with alumni – but I don't think Scott-Ford will qualify!*
> *I would be interested in your thoughts Mark – but whenever convenient to you."*

Well I did look him up. He was a Raleigh boy born 4th September 2021. Little else is recorded. He met his fate on 3rd November 1942; Executed.
If you'd like to get in touch with Tim Redmond or any other alumni please let me know.

One other piece of correspondence very worthy of mention in this report comes from Mark Wise who along with Andrew Polson and several other Cornwallis gentlemen were responsible for organising a birthday luncheon for their senior and experienced Housemaster Ned Long.

Mark Writes,

This is the selection of photographs from the event so please feel free to use whatever takes your fancy ...perhaps one of the cake and one of Ned ?

https://photos.app.goo.gl/ckWGqNAgwjBcYjXH7

A mix of over thirty Cornwallis , Blake and other old boys from across the far corners of the UK , gathered in Hampshire to celebrate Ned's 93rd birthday back in May 2024. The event was held at the Lee On The Solent Conservative club, on what turned out to be one of the hottest days of the summer, enabling everybody to enjoy a real English garden party atmosphere in the brilliant sunshine down on the south coast.

David Forth kindly volunteered to deliver a humorous speech aligning RHS to various Harry Potter scenes and characters, including the boarding of the Hogwarts Express in London heading up to Manningtree, whilst Ned who was in his usual fine form, reminisced on several hilarious incidents from across his school years. He truly has a wonderful recollection of such events and remains a remarkable individual both as an inspirational speaker and fatherhood figure to us all.

Special thanks must go to Peter Willsteed, who sadly was unable to attend the event, but in wishing to ensure he made some form of contribution to the occasion, kindly sponsored the birthday cake which was specifically designed around Neds housemaster roles and his obvious love of rugby !

Finally, none of this would have happened without the full support of the RHSA database and the school for loaning out the banner flag for such a special occasion. Well done to the team of Mark Lucas (RHSA), Andrew Polson and Mark Wise for pulling off such a successful get together !





And a late "fyling" from our Watford Correspondent.

67ers Charente trip

From the initial meet up at Wetherspoons at Stansted to the return flight it was non-stop catch up, banter and laughter.

The famous 5 who flew out with their combined quantities of custard powder and paracetamol for our hosts coupled with enough personal medication to open a pharmacy I was surprised the alarms didn't go off at the baggage checks. Unfortunately the Lime Pickle and Aubergine Pickle had to stay in the UK and Mark's Ghee was 200ml and didn't pass muster (even though he offered to eat half!)

We were introduced on the plane as a 68 year old pensioners stag do to a group who were on an annual dancing trip and one of their number introduced herself to one of our number as a French Countess – an aspiration of one of our clan!

From home-made curry (no bisto or dessicated coconut), to adapted cassoulet, limousine beef, assorted cheeses, meats and wines we didn't starve either.

Group dinner for 9 at the Hotel Haemorrhoid in Confalens , sorry L'Hotel Emeraude was a great evening.

I'm sure this will catch on. And who were in this raucous bunch? – From the exclusive 67ers club: Nicholas Butt (CWD), Stephen Fyles (Blake), Stephen Brown (CWD), Mick Gallagher (Anson), Mark Lucas (St Vincent), Alan Oliver (CWD), Michael O'Connor (Blake), Neil Tink (Howe).

It is a sobering yet uplifting thought that we had been friends for 57 years and that in spite our various physical ailments our minds are in good shape and the bonds of friendship as strong as ever.

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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.
   If you meet a former student who would like to re-connect with the school please point them in my direction.

Things you can do to help us be more effective.
Watch out for upcoming events – usually communicated via email.
Check your details are always up to date – tell us if you change your postal address, mobile phone number, home phone number or email address.
Speak or write to one of the team if you have a concern. All enquiries are strictly confidential.

Need some help planning a reunion? Putting in touch with old friends?
Then give me a call or text 07941957967

Meantime best wishes for the festive season wherever you are

Please write to me with any news or requests. I will always do my best

Mark Lucas

November 2024

RHS Alumni & Community Office & RHSA social media

A summary of the main forum

Many Alumni keep in touch through WhatsApp and similar app;lications

Social media groups **Search using the emboldened title**	Admin
RHSA GC Notices (484 members) "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" https://www.facebook.com/groups/407451282711623/?ref=group_header	Stephen Traynor Ian Rockett
Royal Hospital School Association "To reunite old friends, maintain connections with the school and encourage professional networking, career progression and advice" Search: **Royal-Hospital School-Association**	Aimee Frankham
RHS Alumni and Community Office For FB search "RHS Alumni and Community Office" https://www.instagram.com/rhsalumnioffice/ royalhospitalschool.org/alumni	
Royal Hospital School Careers Network https://www.linkedin.com/in/royal-hospital-school-careers-network-71839b60**/**	Lauren Bayliss-Fuller Katie Gould
RHS Digital Archive (not FaceBook but a website) Visit the website **http://rhsarchives.daisy.websds.net/** Archive access is available on request. A user name and password are required.	Lauren Bayliss-Fuller Katie Gould
The RHS Arms (1747 members) 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"	Alex Hill Andrew Pope Nigel Price Becka Spencer
RHS ~ The Golden Years (827 members) "A group for those who attended RHS during the 1950-80s."	John R G Wood
RHSA Southern Counties Branch (216 members) *"Aims to promote a fun, friendly, all-inclusive RHSA family on the South Coast and inland Southern Counties"*	Nick Gill, Jez Gaskin Jonathon Rivenberg
RHSA East Anglian Branch (303 members) *"A group for members of the RHSA, 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.*	Hannah Scott Maggie Good Ruth Page
The RHS Arms Public Bar (85 members) *"Members wishing to join will need to be approved by the Admin team. Not for the faint hearted. "No moaning and threatening to leave"*	Jason Ricketts John Baker Andy Morgan
Royal Hospital School (born 1st January 1945 to 31st December 1951) (105 members)	Mark Lucas

RHS class of 1967 (346 members) *"Established in November 2014 to reconnect old friends primarily from the 1966 – 68 intake years)*	Mark Lucas
RHS Old boys (1972-74 starters) (157 members)	Mark Lucas David Hulbert Andy Ashworth John R G Wood
RHS '74 intake	Ted Edwards
Royal Hospital School - Early 80's Leavers (371 members)	Mark Lucas Richard Cantelo Mark Seaman
Royal Hospital School Class of '83 (18 members)	Richard Cantelo Mark Lucas
RHS Old Boys Rugby (619 members)	Richard Cantelo Aimee Frankham James Parker Jack Cantelo Harry Chadwick Matthew Jay
Cornwallis - The Golden Years 1960 - 1975 (83 members)	Mark Lucas Brian Gatward Geoff Quade
Hood House FB Group (23 members)	Nigel Price
Drake House (74 members)	Mark Lucas
RHSA - Down Under Alumni (Australia and New Zealand) (100 members)	Mark Lucas
RHSA Camusa (Canada, Mexico and USA) (23 members)	Mark Lucas
St Vincent House Alumni (100 members)	Mark Lucas Nick Samson Rhys Lewis James Swinford
Royal Hospital School Sailing Academy	
Royal Hospital School Alumni Yacht Club (38 members)	Mick O'Connor Brian McCarthy Antony Alsford
Royal Hospital School celebrates Devizes to Westminster (182 members)	Lee Menday Will Jones Matthew Jones
RHS Alumni: Boarding School Syndrome (112 members) Currently archived	Andrew Deuchar

I would like to hear from any member who runs a FB group not listed here or who may want to help set up a new group (by age, geographical area, specific purpose e.g. **GOLF**)