

## OA News Spring 2009

### **Congratulations to:**

**Michael Johnson** (55) on coming fifth in the over 65 world cross country championships in 2008.

**Ludo Graham** (74) on being executive producer and narrator of the splendid BBC2 programme 'Top Dogs'.

**Lawrence Beesley-Peck** on completing the Three Peaks Challenge in May and raising more than £1000 for 'Help the Heroes'.

**Jon Hickton** (90) on raising £48,000 for The British Heart Foundation and Friedreich's Ataxia charities by bicycling with his friends from Land's End to John O' Groats.

**Andrew Barker** (91) on completing the World's most extreme Ironman event, 'The Norseman'.

**Matt Ball** (93) on climbing Mount Fuji – twice!

**Alfie Pearce-Higgins** (01) on completing the Paris marathon in 2hr 29min.

### **OA Events**

#### **OA Cricket Match Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> June**

In a high scoring game the Younger OAs defeated the OA Veterans, their first victory in seven years. Congratulations to **Tom Duff-Gordon** (93) for getting together a strong side, which included three Duff-Gordons and a number of new faces, and for achieving a famous victory over **Vernon Taylor's** (78) team which was lacking a couple of its usual stars. As usual the Younger OAs batted first; **Rory Hills** (80) and **Fred Duff-Gordon** (94) gave them a good start – 50 being on the scoreboard before the first wicket fell – but the star performers were **Rob Champion** (95) and **George Curtis** (94) who both retired having made their 50s. The total of 211 for 8 seemed as if it would be more than enough runs for victory after four Veterans were back in the pavilion (what a great improvement the refurbished pavilion is) before the total had reached 40. However 52 from **Justin Baird-Murray** (78) and good contributions from **Charles Baillie-Hamilton** (70) and **Tavie Boyne** (78) caused considerable anxiety to the younger team before the final wicket fell 20 runs short of the required total. It is fair to say that the batting on both sides was more distinguished than the bowling with no bowler taking more than two wickets. The fielding was of a good standard and some excellent catches were held.

#### **OA Golf Monday September 7<sup>th</sup>**

Once again **Tony Johnstone** (40) and **Nigel Beevor** (54) very kindly invited us to Royal St George's. The brothers Hunter-Jones, **Patrick** (63) and **Nick** (67) were no match for the skill of Nigel with some help from **Andrew Haggard** (81) and were beaten 4 and 3. **Michael Haggard** (49) was unable to play owing to a groggy knee and he and Tony followed the foursome in a buggy helping to find balls and making useful comments. As usual the weather was ideal – cloudless skies with a gentle breeze to keep the temperature perfect.

#### **OA Gathering at The Larrik Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> September.**

A very happy evening was spent at The Larrik at the kind invitation of the owner, **James Corbett** (91). The Larrik is an ideal venue and James provided some lovely eats, including Bovril bread! The age range of those present was 81 to 25. It was good to see many OAs who had attended previous gatherings and the new faces included **Robin Bridgeman** (43), **Ed Prestwich** (98), **Hugo Fleming** (90), **Thomas Legh** (98), **Henry Grant** (98), **Tom Homfray** (97), **Tom Richards** (95), **Michael Dyer** (95) and **Oli Fowler** (93).

### **General News**

#### ***Celebrating Eddie***

This is a short book about **Eddie Tomlinson's** (91) life written by his parents, Howard and Heather. It is a kaleidoscope of twenty-four and a half years, chartering boy to man, of a life lived to the full, jam-packed with laughter, love and dazzling achievement. All profits from the sale of the book will go to three charities nominated by Howard and Heather. (The ISBN number is 978-0-9561862-0-1 and the price is £9.99). I can wholly recommend it as a lovely read – especially for those who knew Eddie.

#### **Success at Shrewsbury 2008-2009**

**Stephen Craigen** (04) won the Senior Brass Music Prize; he has been the principal horn player in the school's symphony orchestra for several years. He gained a distinction in the Trinity Guildhall performers

diploma and was an outstanding soloist in Benjamin Britten's serenade for Tenor, Horn and Strings at St John's, Smith Square early in the year. He has been offered a place to read music at Trinity College, Cambridge.

**Toby Lywood** (05) won the Murray Senior Prize for History, awarded to the best historian in the Lower Sixth Form.

**James Rogers-Coltman** (05) won the Hill Art Prize which is awarded to the Lower Sixth Form pupil who has made most progress and shows the most promise.

**Oliver Banks** (04) was a member of both the Soccer 1<sup>st</sup> X1 and the Rugby 1<sup>st</sup> XV.

#### **'A final salute to hero of Burma campaign'**

The following are extracts from an article headed as above in the *Western Gazette* in February:

"A funeral service has been held for the last surviving British officer who fought with the 2/5<sup>th</sup> Royal Gurkha Rifles at the Battle of Imphal in Burma in 1944. **John Martin MBE** (38), aged 84, had lived for nearly 30 years in Durweston, near Blandford Forum.

His distinguished career was typical of a family where military service spans five generations. He was born in Chester, the son of a former Welsh Fusiliers officer who later served as Wing Commander with the RAF. He originally wanted to join the RAF but his eyesight was not good enough, so he was commissioned into the Indian Army aged 18, and served in Burma with the 2<sup>nd</sup> battalion Royal Gurkha Rifles. It was there that he fought at the Battle of Imphal which, along with the Battle of Kohima, was a turning point in the Burma Campaign against the Japanese. His experiences of the battle are recorded in the Imperial War Museum Book of the Burma War, published in 2002. He also served in Japan, Hong Kong, Malaya and Cyprus, where he won an operational MBE during the post-Suez Middle East crisis for his command of eleven major units.

In Malaya he met and married his wife Dorothy, who also had an exemplary career that began during World War Two when she trained as a wireless operator for the Special Operations Executive, later working in Colombo, Calcutta and Istanbul for MI6.

He ended his military career as a colonel in 1979 and the couple retired to Durweston, where he served on the parish council as emergency planning official. The pair were active supporters of the parish fete and St Nicholas' Church. They participated as war veterans in the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary parade of VJ Day in London, where Mr Martin marched with the Gurkhas and his wife with the First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. She died seven years ago, but Mr Martin was well enough last year to attend a lunch commemorating the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the forming of the 5<sup>th</sup> Royal Gurkha Rifles at the RMA Sandhurst.

He was intensely proud when his grandson became the fifth generation of the family to be commissioned into the armed services. His grandfather was the first Martin to be distinguished in service, in the South African War, and was pulled out of retirement when the Territorial Army was formed to command the Lowland Brigade. His father, Aubrey, was commissioned into the Royal Welch Fusiliers and later transferred to the Lancashire Yeomanry, serving as a Wing Commander in the RAF during World War Two. His eldest son Michael retired from the Army after 36 years last July having served with the Gloucesters and Worcester and Sherwood Foresters. His youngest son Colin was commissioned into the Royal Welch Fusiliers and was awarded an OBE for his work in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami. Mr Martin's eldest grandson, Nicholas, was commissioned in 2004 into the Queen's Dragoon Guards. Younger grandson, Charles, enlisted in the Honourable Artillery Company last year, and gained top ranking on a selection course to join one of their Sabre Squadrons."

#### **A letter from William McConnel (45)**

When we came to choosing schools for our children – it would have been in the beginning of the 1960s – a new mood seemed to have been moving through academia; discipline, corporal punishment, old values and so on, all seemed to be being swept aside in favour of the "new" .... G.A. was retiring from Abberley and we were fearful of what might come in his stead. So we looked around for a school that had a headmaster of the 'old school' – and we found one with Rex Machin at Bilton Grange. This seemed to work very well for our oldest – but very sadly Rex Machin got cancer and a new broom came in, which was alright but not the same. As our excellent Scottish poet put it "...the best laid schemes o' mice and men gang after a-gley" (how true that is).

I'm telling you this partly to show you how we appeared disloyal to Abberley, and partly to express my complete approval of a huge amount of the traditional way of educating children; because I think it needs to be said owing to all the huff and puff of (in my view) complete idiocy in these modern days.

There are two main things which stick in my mind about Abberley. The first was having to learn 100 lines of poetry every summer term. We HAD to learn Jacques's 'Seven Ages of Man' and could choose the remaining lines out of the 'Dragon Book of Verse'. Both **Jimmy** (43) (William's brother. Ed) and I remember "All the world's a stage....." and now that I am getting old, I really appreciate "The sixth age shifts into the lean and slippered pantaloone, with spectacles on nose and pouch on side, his youthful hose well stretched a world too wide for his shrunk shrank....."(maybe the words aren't quite right – it's from memory). The point of this is that Abberley put it firmly into one's little head that we get old, decay and die. You may well think: 'that's obvious – everyone knows that.' But there is a great deal of difference between 'knowing' (a fact in the outside world) and 'knowing' something which is actually going to happen to one's self. If you look around at how people behave, there are relatively few who properly appreciate their mortality. I have met someone recently who seems to be having great problems with this universally 'known' piece of information. We, humans, love to tell ourselves lies – unconsciously of course.

But that is not the only advantage of learning poetry – rather it is that (I think) the appreciation of verse is probably deeply embedded in everyone – some more so than others – and it would seem to be a school's function to awake interest in the child where ever it is possible. It was the Dragon Book of Verse that started me and I still go back to it for the 'gems' it contains. I do hope that Abberley continues with poetry learning – but I fully appreciate that it is properly out of fashion.

Another excellent thing which I remember was Miss James' sayings. For instance: Me: 'Miss James my pencil has broken'. Miss James: 'No William, you have broken the pencil.' Or, Me: Miss James, my pen won't work'. Miss James: 'Bad workmen blame their tools, William.' - and many, many other maxims of the same kind. Of course there were lots of other things too. I really enjoyed Mr Neal reading aloud to us on a Wednesday evening, Jumbo Stone's gramophone records and Heath Robinson books, the Scouts and playing in the grounds. I was not very academically inclined at that age, I was a late developer; it must have been hard getting anything into my head. Another thing I appreciated (in later life) was the generally religious orientation of the school – there was no modern day swithering about G.A. nor the others. Boys feel these things.

All in all I was most grateful to Abberley. Were you there when there was (amongst the boys) a great German spy scare? Looking back on it, it was really rather silly, but at the time to me and lots of others, very real. We thought that we could pick up enemy signals and imaginations ran riot – however the heavy hand of authority arrived and the whole edifice crumbled into nothing.

### **Instant Restaurants**

The following is an extract from an article in the *Sunday Times*:

"The food at these instant restaurants ranges from quasi-student to haute cuisine. It's haute-plus at **David Clasen's** (78) First Weekend, which takes place every month in his Belgravia drawing room."

Clasen, a bright-eyed former banker with cheffy ambitions, serves up an "aggressively seasonal" five-course menu including delicacies such as "celeriac whoosh" to an invited clientele that, on the night I was there, included QCs and opera singers. We ate whooshes of this and morsels of that – much of it from his father's kitchen garden – and moaned with pleasure, while Clasen stayed firmly in the kitchen.

### **A message from Anthony Blackmore (46) on Facebook**

We wrinklies have to stay on the leading - if not the bleeding - edge of technology. Otherwise the youngsters will push us down!

Keep it up.

As my Dr says [in a note on his computer] 'this patient has too much on - mustn't let him die'. I don't have time, apart from anything else.

Took up singing at age 70 [apart from the compulsory year in the choir at Abberley, I've never sung a note in my life, except perhaps in a pub with a pint pot in my hand] but now cannot get enough of it. I sing in our church choir - I'm told that but for me they couldn't do 4-part harmony - and the Wetherby Choral Society, and any 'come and sing' Mozart Requiems and Messiahs I can find. And I'm now more often than not able to read the bass line in the hymns on Sunday.

I do the Wetherby CS web site - see <http://www.facebook.com/1/www.wetherbychoral.org.uk>

It brings in so many youngish members that, last year, we had to limit new members.

## A letter in the *Daily Telegraph* under the heading 'Kissing at Arm's Length'

An elderly aunt's solution to this problem was to say: "Don't try and kiss me, I haven't shaved" **Tim Bevan** (53)

**An email from Andrew Barker (91)**

I have actually been meaning to write with news of my "development" for over 15 years! But I don't really like talking about me very much so it hasn't happened despite numerous false starts. Anyway now you have caught me so here goes... Left Abberley for Winchester, which I enjoyed immensely. In general I tolerated my academic studies but thrived on extra-curricular activities such as DT and sport. My exam results were always average but never amazing, and I never got to grips with Latin after my late start at Abberley. I was in all the top sets for Science subjects and the bottom sets for everything else. I enjoyed this extreme polarity and perhaps cultivated it a little.

I avoided mainstream sports and concentrated on all the minor ones. I became captain of Judo and Fives and became Schools champion in the former (for my weight category) and reached quarter finals of the World Champs in the latter. I was also captain of Field Athletics as I was rather good at the Javelin. I also played water-polo, basketball and of-course Winchester Football. I was in the OTH 15's team for my final two years.

In general I was savagely determined to succeed in all the things that I enjoyed, and totally ambivalent to the things I did not.

I did not like my housemaster. I don't think he liked me either. When he made me head of house I suspected that it was because he had read "The Art of War" and sought to keep his enemy close. But I was pleased because I had also read that book and knew that I could better wage war from within! My last year was a thrilling game of cat and mouse. Looking back it is clear that I have always enjoyed adrenalin. I have enough schoolboy capers type stories to fill a book, but somehow I managed to graduate from Winchester without expulsion..

My forte at school was Design Technology, and I practically lived in the workshops. Unfortunately both my parents and teachers were not sure if this was a good thing and kept trying to push me into medicine or law. It wasn't until I won first prize in a televised "Young Designer of the Year" competition (for my A level project) that anyone allowed me to entertain some different ideas. I was awarded a bursary to study Industrial Design & Technology at Brunel University. Brunel was a dump and a real anti-climax after Winchester. The course was good but I found my new class-mates juvenile and dull. Most of them away from home for the first time going crazy with their new freedom with binge drinking etc. I put my head down, worked hard, won a few more design comps, and finished my degree as quickly as I could.

Fell in love with a Norwegian and moved to Norway. Worked in a design consultancy in Stavanger. Won a scholarship to do an MSc (Eng) at Liverpool University. Moved to Liverpool. Started Climbing. Became (obsessively good) Fell out of love with a Norwegian. Graduated. Got a job in a Design Consultancy near Guildford. Bought my first wreck of a house, renovated it. Climbed a lot. Met my now wife, Charlotte, who was then working for the BBC. Started kite surfing. Won a few design awards. Stopped learning much after 2 years and hated my boss. Worked there for 4 years in total before realizing that I would never be happy until a) I lived near the sea, b) I was my own boss.

2004 Charlotte and I both quit jobs, sell my house and move to South Devon where we buy a thatched cottage by the sea. We renovated and created a beachside cafe and B&B called [Seabreeze](#), which is now a thriving business. Carried on doing freelance design work for a while but soon gave that up as I became addicted to kitesurfing and needed to spend as much time as possible on the water.

2005 Married Charlotte. By now climbing has stopped but I am semi-pro kitesurfer.

2006 Florence Barker is born!

2007 Start new business [Endurancelife](#) with my brother, James (93).

2008 Archie Barker is born!

2009 Just returned from Norway where I took part in and finished the World's most extreme Ironman event, the ["Norseman"](#)

James and I bumped into Mr Jackson in St Ives a few weeks ago. It was great to see him; he was one of my all time favourite teachers and I still know by heart a number of great poems that he made us learn. I think he was quite surprised when I recited Ozymandias word perfectly to him!

### **Can any OA claim a more interesting six years than the following?**

So the past 6 years, has it been that long? I have been having a great deal of fun for sure (possibly a time when being serious might have been more expected and cracking down to a serious career and becoming a serious family man, however I have avoided those pitfalls so far). I have sold photocopiers and phones, I have worked for the City of London Police doing intelligence, I have fired gun salutes at the Tower of London and learnt how to skydive, I have skied (and broken my leg) for my regiment (the HAC) and broken my neck for another regiment (riding out for the Household Cavalry in Hyde Park), I am a fitness instructor, an unarmed combat instructor, an English teacher (to foreigners) and have spoken at Speakers Corner. So, certainly I have kept myself busy!

Currently I am coordinating an enormous project to do with prisons for the Ministry of Justice and I run my own comedy evening (I have even performed myself, including at the Comedy Store, great fun!). However, the evening runs on a Tuesday, and so sadly I will not be able to make the 8th. At some point it would be great to get you down to one of my evenings - I will have to carefully vet my comics before I allow that though as some of the styles are variable and still developing... One of the best acts is in fact a secondary science teacher.

(Can any OA who was in the school 1983-88 guess who it is? Ed.)

### **A letter from Bill Austin (41)**

Canon Richardson. He must have arrived at the beginning of the war, and lived I think in the village of Abberley. He taught us Religion, but I had my doubts about him from the very earliest because he taught things that were contrary to the Bible Story we all knew, such as the Virgin Birth, Moses various miracles at the Exodus and the plagues, all of which he seemed to believe were not miracles at all but had physical explanations. I wonder how he could have become a CANON with such extreme views. Even more disturbing were the stories told by his young son who came into the school at the same time, who explained that his father kept a very large high powered transmitter in a cupboard at his house and spent much time secretly using it, leading us to believe that he was a spy. We never plucked up enough courage to report this to the headmaster just in case we were wrong and got him and his son into trouble. I was becoming a more senior boy at the time, having entered the school in '35, and wonder whether there was any follow up to this knowledge or if any of your readers of this magazine have any memories of these events. I constantly wonder about this unsolved mystery even today. (Can any OA shed any light on this remarkable story? Ed)

**Paul Gunton's** (52) memories are interesting, though the XU4 number plate was not on the Bugatti but on my father's first big car after the 1<sup>st</sup> W.W which encouraged the Police to wave him through and stop the traffic for several years until they finally twigged. He transferred the number from car to car after that as it was a very unusual number. I inherited the number but found it too expensive to keep transferring it and finally let it lapse in the 1970's. A good story. Possibly could have been worth a bit of money now, but you have to keep these numbers 'alive' to keep them.

Jumbo Stone, who taught me the piano, and also let me read the Barbar books in French, which **Simon Batt** (45) remembers, but does he remember him chasing us around the changing room with a wet towel after the communal bath which he often supervised? I also remember the senior changing room as the place where we had our throats painted to prevent some horrible infection which was passing around the school. I also caught almost every imaginable disease at school for which I am grateful to be able now to enjoy immunity. The improved San had just been built, and I "enjoyed" chicken pox and whooping cough there, but mumps had to be endured in dorm 3, as the whole school was infected. We passed the time in those days knitting scarves for soldiers and sailors, and the Matron and Undermatron (Miss Jackson) helped us pick up the dropped stitches.

There was a gramophone in the San and one record I remember was "We all went up, up, up the mountain, and then we all came down, down, down again". I expect **Geoffrey Howe** (40) will remember that as we were in a cubicle together, next the Matron's room, suffering from whooping cough, (he had it badly, but as I did not cough, the doctor wanted to be sure that I got it) and had to spend part of the Easter holidays in the San. Mrs Ashton was very kind and gave us all Easter presents.

(Later) I've just remembered the other side of the famous gramophone record we played over and over again in the San. I think it must have been the only record there. The gramophone was on the window sill in the corridor.

One side was "We all went up, up, up the mountain", by Ralph Butler. Recorded by Elton Box and Desmond Cox. The other side was Shirley Temple singing "Oh my Goodness". Lyrics by Mack Gordon and Harry Revel. I found the details on Google of course.

The words still come back to me sometimes, which shows how impressionable young minds can be.!

Of course, in those days the gramophone would probably have been made by Decca and had to be wound up all the time.

"At times I ought to hate you, you make me feel so blue, but honest I can't hate you, when you smile at me the way you do, Oh my goodness!.

#### **A quote of the week from the Sunday Times 03.03.09**

"How much are people who follow the Jade Goody coverage succumbing to exactly the same appetites as those who once took their picnics to a public hanging?" **James Landale** (81), BBC political correspondent, who was on a course of chemotherapy for non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

#### **An e-mail from Charlie Walker (67)**

I am afraid I won't be able to make that Monday evening. Never having been near on officers mess in my life I am quite certain that if I did turn up I would be a disgrace to the old school! I am not even sure if I have a shirt that can do up at the neck anymore - actually that isn't totally true as Austerity rules these days and going around the city for meetings in 2009, a suit is de rigeur (no doubt ties will follow soon as the crunch bites harder) - well gone are the days of casual jackets and chinos - at least until another generation forgets basic principles and creates another financial disaster!

If there are any of my generation that attend do give them my best wishes and email address if they wanted to drop me a line to say hello. (His e-mail is [Charlie@ccwalker.co.uk](mailto:Charlie@ccwalker.co.uk). Ed)

I was actually saying to a friend of mine last week, a chap called Rupert Lywood who had all his boys at Abberley I believe, that when I was there my contemporaries were from grand families, Cadburys (whom I recall being picked up for an exeat by helicopter once, which caused great excitement at the time and now seems a bit flash, or maybe it is now common place for Abberley parents. (I thought it was Ferranti who was picked up by helicopter? Ed) Ferrantis, Flemings, Swires, Cadogans and FM Monty's grandson and no doubt many more that I have forgotten. I doubt they are saying that they went to school with the Walkers!

Anyway I hope all goes well and that we will be able to meet up again on one of these occasions. It would be good to see you after all these years. The last time I visited Abberley was on my honeymoon 32 years ago - believe it or not - what a romantic I am (though we are still together so I guess I must be doing something right). We stayed in someone's garage converted to a B&B and could not even afford tea at the Elms. Still I did meet Dick Marshall which was a great pleasure - we chatted while he was umpiring a game of cricket!!

A later e-mail: "You are probably correct re Ferranti/Cadbury debate but it was certainly a major event at the time!

Health and Safety - arggh! Why can't we live by common sense - didn't do us any harm - can't imagine when it was so cold in Jan that ice hockey on the ink pot was allowed was it? My first memory of Abberley was watching that on my own half freezing to death in shorts! That and building the "world record" snowman!"

**Extracts from a letter from William McConnel (45), brother of Jimmy McConnell (43) who recently died.**

"Having been asked for memories about Jimmy, all sorts of things come to mind – trivial of course, but it is amazing how these trivia remain implanted in the mind. I think on this particular occasion we were getting off the 'school train' at Shrub Hill – Mr Ashton was there trying to get us all organised. I think it was about 1940 or 41 and Jimmy had got some words on his mind: 'Margaret Rose sat on a pin; Margaret rose.' I thought this was very clever – and funny. However Mr Ashton turned to him and said: 'Oh shut up McConnel.' Jimmy, deflated, did."

"Goodness, Mr Ashton was a good headmaster and it must have been so difficult for him during the war. Do you remember Mr Noalas –as (spelling ?), the French master who came from Belgium? He lived in a bothy somewhere down near the vegetable gardens – and the great thing was to ask him where he lived: 'Sir, Sir, where do you live?' And the answer was, of course, 'In de botty', which caused great amusement. I'm sorry for being so childish."

**An e-mail from Paul Gunton (52)**

Since your note I have had a very pleasant exchange with **Bill Austin (41)**.

I wonder if I sent you a copy of the Abberley Guest House (South Africa) information leaflet? Can you verify if the word Abberley is indeed the Gaelic word for 'Place of Happiness'? If it is, it would fit the bill for the establishment in Worcestershire.

Another reminder of my travels concerning Abberley was when I was working in New Zealand for two years based in Auckland. Importing and blending tea. At Easter 1965 I was touring South Island with a tent in the boot of the car (the one I used during my Owl Patrol days) and stopped on the road between Lake Tekapo and Christchurch. The backdrop of hills was very, very similar to Big Woodbury and Little Woodbury and out of idle interest, before driving on, I looked at the map and the name of the place stared back at me – Woodbury.

I watched a few episodes of the Sorcerer's Apprentice, not available to the three grandchildren in Malta, but much appreciated by their granddad; it was good to see that the clock tower was used.

(Can any OA tell me whether Abberley is Gaelic for a 'Place of Happiness'? Ed)

**A message on Facebook from James Purvis (81) (Not edited!)**

Re: greeting Sir (Not many OAs call me 'Sir'! Ed)

"Cancer that awful Glad that u have the all clear now ... living in Monmouth had many revelations in my short life...bumped into the almighty in 1992 through Meditation have done all sorts, got involved with Art, nursing, steiner schools, promoting meditation to business. am currently working with the prison service introducing meditation to the in-mates got married divorced and am currently living with a young lady in monmouth who has 3 children we have been together on and off for 22 years we love each other very much and God willing have another Child on the way but it is too soon too count our chickens...paying the bills at the moment working with an antique dealer ... what else have enjoyed the Art world <http://www.facebook.com/1/54ca5;www.bluetubeart.co.uk> goto gallery . ventured in and out of the corporate world when i have needed some stability not much else ... strange i can see marys face as clear as a bell in my minds eye send her my love maybe we could visit you guys some time...much love for now James Purvis"

**An e-mail from Ben Morgan (89)**

Lovely to hear from you and I'm very glad that Abberley prospers. Yes I am still flying helicopters for the Navy. I've recently qualified as an instructor after several years in various hot and unpleasant places which is very worrying for all concerned but at least means that I can spend some time at home. I'm based at Culdrose in Cornwall but am hoping to move to the tri service training establishment at Shawbury in the

not too distant future. If I do manage to get a place there I would love to bring an aircraft to Abberley for an open day at some point in a couple of years time.

I sadly rarely get to see many old boys these days except **James Beagley** (89) who you will be pleased to hear celebrated the birth of his first child (a daughter) today!

I hope to be able to drop in (literally) one of these days.

#### **An e-mail from James Robbins (93)**

Well in fact I am in the UK at the moment but I am gearing myself to drive down to Marrakech and be there for the summer. Before now I have been co-running the Tigmi Hotel with the General Manager and have been spending about 2 weeks there every month but that hasn't been working so I am now getting ready to move there.

It has been a huge change in my life, and one for the better on the most part. I started about a year ago. I could say I saw the Banking crisis coming but I didn't, it was just that private banking was not for me at that time and I was already taking a role in running Tigmi; so Father asked if I would be interested in changing the fortunes of the hotel. I obviously said yes before really thinking about it and it has been fantastic. **Roland Ballard** (93) came out to stay for a while last summer and I am hoping to have many more Old Abberley guys come and stay this summer. (See [www.Tigmi.com](http://www.Tigmi.com). Ed)

#### **A chance meeting**

**Giles Morgan** (78) and **Barnaby Rugge-Price** (82) met at Battersea Ironsides RFC where their children play in the mini section and where Giles helps coach the under 8s. (Are there any other OAs who are members of BIRFC or who have children playing at the Club? Ed)

#### **An e-mail from Ludo Graham (74)**

(in reply to mine congratulating him on 'Top Dogs'.Ed)

"How kind of you to write about our Top Dogs series - sadly (or perhaps not) I didn't have to join the old dogs on their travels, although I would love to visit Afghanistan one day. Sailing round Cape Horn I'm very happy to leave to my salty sea dog father... He's about to embark in his little boat from Scandiwegia, where it overwintered, back to Blighty in July. He's keen that Tom or I should join him, but I fear I'd be nothing but a proverbial (and very sea-sick) albatross."

#### **Extracts from an email from Tom Richards (95)**

"I've driven past Abberley a few times over the last few years and have even done a quick drive through (during the holidays, otherwise I would have stopped for a proper look round), and have some great memories of my time there (every time I get on a sledge memories of the ink pot slope and the danger of frozen cowpats come flooding back!), I was even recounting the scout camp games trying to get coins up to the clock tower, everyone who hears the stories are amazed by the freedom we had. Even the early morning cross country training runs with Geoffrey in the dark were suddenly recalled in January when I was struggling to get in shape for the London Marathon, they seemed a lot easier back then as I dragged myself kicking screaming out of bed to put in the five miles along the river - and then tried my best not to fall asleep at my desk!

Otherwise life has been uneventful over the summer. I've been at KPMG for 5 years (since graduating from Bristol) and feel extremely unadventurous as the general trend amongst friends is to have had a portfolio of careers by this stage. Having got through the accountancy exams and first 3 years in audit, I transferred 18 months ago to the restructuring department carrying out advisory work for distressed companies, and also working on formal administrations, which has provided some interesting and challenging experiences and am really enjoying it.

I've been living at various spots in Clapham since coming to London (Mum and Dad still work down in London so there have been the odd retreats home, although I'm not sure if they enjoy these too much!) although I will be abandoning my southern routes to head to Earls Court next year to move in with my Girlfriend of two and half years. I still manage to get a week or two up in Wales each year, and **Jo Summers** (74) now lives nearby at Bala. My parents bumped into her at the Price's drinks and had a good catch up and laugh at the fact that we still have a corner cupboard and table from the Abberley workshop in the house, not to mention the "THOMAS" toast rack that is still going strong some 14/15 years later albeit with a lot of superglue, I think it's been put back together at least half a dozen times!"

### **Engagements**

Harvey Flather (85) to Vanessa Woodfine (sister of **Peter** (91))  
Alex Letts (93) to Pippa Bowden

### **Weddings**

Ben Champkin (92) to Sian Roberts  
Roland Ballard (93) to Miranda Gallimore  
Jules Hartley (93) to Veronica Massie  
Guy Adams (91) to Katerina Bond  
Alex Miller (85) to Katie  
Max Miller (95) to Elizabeth  
Wilfrid Laughler to Alice Bethell

### **Births**

A son to Simon and Rebecca Rollings (87)  
A son to Max and Karen Grafftey-Smith (87)  
A son to James and Emily Davenport (85)  
A son to Elwyn and Charlotte Gladstone (87)  
A daughter to Rupert and Jude Hunt (88)  
A son to Edward and Alexandra Gibson-Watt (91)  
A son to Nicholas and Helen Diggle (82)  
A son to Richard and Flora Price (90)  
A son to James and Gemma Johnston (85)  
A daughter to Dominic and Anna Hazlehurst (79)  
A daughter to Duncan and Alex Ballard (90)  
A son and a daughter to Simon and Emma Baillie-Hamilton (76)

### **Obituaries**

P.N.Railing (1934-1938)  
H.F.Stephenson ((1986-1991)  
J.F.W.McConnell (1938-1943)  
T.G.Abell (1939-1943)  
R.D.C.McAlpine CMG (1928-1932)  
J.S.H.Matthews (1930-1934)  
E.M.W.Griffith CBE DL FLS FRSA (1942-1946)  
P.G.Throssell (1968-1971)  
D.B.Trevor-Jones (1967-1973)

### **Peter Railing**

Peter joined the school in January 1934. During his last year he played in the football 1<sup>st</sup> XI at full-back and the rugby 1<sup>st</sup> XV in the second row, but it as a musician that he will be best remembered; he played piano solos in school concerts and in his last term the magazine report on the concert included "Railing has improved as a pianist and in both his items he played more difficult music with accuracy and expression, while he has a natural sympathetic touch." He also played the dulcimer in the band. His final dramatic performance was as the washerwoman in Toad of Toad Hall. He passed into Winchester where he played for two years in 'Princes' (the rackets 1<sup>st</sup> pair). After Winchester he was commissioned in to Grenadier Guards and was Intelligence Officer for the 4<sup>th</sup> battalion in NW Europe from 1944-1946; he became a captain and was awarded the C-in-C's Certificate of Merit. In 1947 he went up to New College, Oxford. He became a company director and later secretary to the Guards Club. He married Joanna in 1956 with whom he had four sons, at least one of whom was educated at Moor Park and visited Abberley to play in matches.

### **Fred Stephenson**

Thank you so much for your e-mail about Fred's death, which has been an appalling shock for us.

As you know, he was building a successful career as a Chartered Surveyor. He was an Associate Director with Lambert Smith Hampton and he had a good salary, a nice flat in Brixton and a wide circle of friends. As I am sure you gathered from the notice, he took his own life. From the letters that he left, it was clear that this was something that he had contemplated doing for nearly fifteen years and he finally did the deed last week.

My children have been an enormous support to both Nea and me and **Guy** (83) has handled much of the burden manfully.

I know that Fred enjoyed his time at Abberley and I am sure that the friends that he made at school will miss him. We will be announcing the date of a Memorial Service for him in Gloucestershire in the next month or so.

All good wishes.

As ever,

**Tim** (53)

### **Christopher McAlpine CBE**

Christopher was at Abberley from September 1929 to July 1932. He won an exhibition to Winchester, excelling in Classics, French and English. He took a leading role in the school Play and was a member of an exceptionally good cricket XI. From Winchester he went up to New College, Oxford and then into the RNVR from 1939-1946 where he became a Lt.Cdr. instructor in intelligence. He married Helen in 1943 and had a daughter and two sons, one of whom, **Alastair** (59), is an OA. He joined the Foreign Office in 1946 and stayed with them until 1969. In 1967 he was made CMG. After leaving the diplomatic corps he joined Baring Brothers and became MD.

The following is a tribute paid by Sir Kemmeth Scott at Christopher's Thanksgiving Service:

"It is entirely fitting that this gathering of Christopher's family and friends should be called a "Service", because service was a key to Christopher's life and work – service to God, to his country, and to his fellow human beings. He had a deep religious faith, a strong sense of duty, and a generous desire to help others, and these qualities – together with his irrepressible sense of fun – endeared him to all he met.

I was privileged to be a colleague of Christopher's in the Diplomatic Service, and we first met over fifty years ago when he and Helen joined the British Embassy in Moscow. There is a special bond which links all who have served together in the claustrophobic and often hostile environment of the Moscow Diplomatic Corps during the Cold War, and the Embassy team worked and played together almost as a family. Christopher was First Secretary and Head of Chancery, a key appointment which meant virtually that he was Chief of Staff to the Ambassador, supervising the work of the political section, taking the lead in the administration of the Embassy as a whole, and ensuring coordination between the various sections. All of us junior secretaries who served under him remember his meticulous insistence that the Embassy's reports to London should be immaculately drafted, even under time pressure; after some more than usually opaque initiative by the Soviet Government I remember him saying: "We're far too busy to think, we must start drafting!" We all learned a great deal from him about the diplomatic trade and tried to live up to his high standards.

He was also responsible for Embassy security, a vital job at a time when the K.G.B. was constantly trying to subvert and seduce foreign diplomats. This was a part of the job which Christopher took particularly seriously, and I remember the Embassy going on to a state of red alert when it was revealed that the Naval Attache's nanny had fallen in love with a well-known member of the K.G.B. They subsequently got married, sent their children to English public schools, and the ex-nanny became a pillar of the English church in Moscow; but at the time it seemed that there had been a major breach in our defences, and Christopher was deeply worried by it. We had to report to him any contacts we had with unofficial Russians, and he thus became a kind of father confessor to the Embassy staff, a role which he fulfilled with great sympathy and understanding. He was also often our priest – the Bishop of Fulham and the Vicar of Helsinki paid us occasional visits, but our Sunday services were mostly conducted by Christopher.

All this was serious stuff, but somehow Christopher's sense of fun always shone through, and there was often laughter in the Chancery. Outside the office he and Helen were renowned throughout the Diplomatic Corps for their wonderful parties, the most memorable of which was when Helen, in her very anglicised Russian, somehow persuaded the authorities to let her hire a pleasure boat on which we all sailed down the Moscow river, served by Russian waiters with an excellent meal and lots of drink, and dancing to Scottish dance music from a tape recorder. There were also parties at the Embassy dacha outside the city, and skiing parties – skiing was a strenuous business, with no ski-lifts so that you had to "herring-bone" up the hill before skiing down it, an exercise to which Christopher brought great skill and enthusiasm.

Another winter distraction was a number of Embassy plays and revues, often directed by Christopher and sometimes containing some very irreverent satire about the Soviet system. There was a well-known statue in Moscow of scantily clad male and female workers of heroic proportions holding aloft a hammer and a sickle, and I remember Christopher persuading the very

elegant baronet who was our Commercial Secretary and the wife of the British Minister to portray these figures on stage, singing a song full of double entendres called “Onward and Upward”. I am sure there are many here who have similar memories of Christopher as a theatrical director, not only in Moscow but in Peru, Mexico and elsewhere.

When Christopher’s father had suggested the Foreign Office as a career he was reluctant, because he imagined himself spending his life stamping passports and getting drunken fellow-citizens out of gaol in unspeakable places. He had spent the war in the Royal naval Reserve, and had been offered promotion to Commander if he was prepared to stay in the Navy. He was tempted, because he loved the sea and sailing was one of his passions, but he agreed to sit the Foreign Office exam which of course he passed with flying colours. In fact he was eminently qualified for a diplomatic career, and in Helen he had the ideal partner. His first two jobs in the Foreign Office were rather more glamorous than stamping passports: he began as a member of the British delegation to the Peace Conference at the end of the war, sitting behind the Foreign Secretary, Ernest Bevin, and recording and reporting meetings of the Council of Foreign Ministers. He clearly distinguished himself in this role, because he was very soon appointed to be one of Bevin’s Private Secretaries, a post usually given to young diplomats already destined for higher things.

He and Helen were then posted to Germany, where they first showed their skill at making friends and influencing people, and after three successful years there he returned to London as Head of the Training and Recruitment Section of the Personnel Department – a job for which his sympathetic interest in his colleagues and his shrewd judgement of character admirable suited him. Many members of the Diplomatic Service who joined during his time in Personnel Department recall with gratitude the way in which he welcomed them and made them feel part of the team. He worked long hours, and commuted by train from their home in Surrey, but he somehow found time to take Russian lessons to add to his panoply of languages – German, French and Spanish – in all of which he was fluent,

It was no doubt his fluency in Spanish which led to his selection as Gentleman in Attendance on the Peruvian delegation to The Queen’s Coronation in 1953. The hire car which was to take Christopher and Helen to the Coronation reception at the Palace broke down, and they eventually arrived in a baby Austin amid the cavalcade of Rolls-Royces and Bentleys, and were given a special cheer by the crowds outside the Palace. Shortly afterwards, with unusual logic, Personnel Department posted him to Peru as Head of Chancery and Deputy to the Ambassador. Here again he and Helen threw themselves enthusiastically into the social life of Lima as well as running the Embassy under the very laid-back supervision of a rather eccentric Ambassador.

There followed the three years in Moscow, after which the McAlpines returned to London, where Christopher became Assistant Head of the Northern Department and was installed in a tiny office (which had been Anthony Eden’s loo when he was Foreign Secretary) from which he conducted the “Cod War” with Iceland. Then in 1962 he received a well-deserved promotion and moved to New York as Deputy Consul-General. This was an opportunity for Christopher and Helen to make many American friends and contacts, and an important part of the job was to travel round the north-eastern United States explaining British foreign policy in a series of lectures and speeches to American audiences. It was a happy time; but the happiest and most successful years were to follow, with Christopher’s appointment as Counsellor in Mexico. Here his main task was to promote British trade, and to persuade British firms to come and try their luck in the lucrative Mexican market. He had not been involved in trade promotion before, but he took to it with enthusiasm and success. Once again the McAlpine gift for entertaining and making friends was a huge asset; and once again their kindness and sympathetic support for the staff serving under them made them immensely popular. One of those who served with them in Mexico described them as the life and soul of the Embassy, and that was true of all the posts in which they served.

It was in Mexico that Christopher’s skill in trade promotion came to the attention of the directors of Barings, then a highly successful merchant bank, and on his return to London after four years in Mexico he was offered a directorship in the bank. He was reluctant to leave the Service which he loved; but he eventually accepted Barings’ offer, and it turned out to be a wise choice for him and his family, though a loss for the Diplomatic Service. He would undoubtedly have become a very successful Ambassador; but from the time Christopher and Helen were married in 1943 until he joined Barings twenty-six years later they had lived in no fewer than sixteen houses at home and abroad, and one of the great advantages of his new career was that they were able to provide a more permanent and stable home for the family, in Chelsea for thirteen years and then for twenty-five years in Tetbury; and they were able to enjoy family life with their children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren of whom Christopher was immensely proud.”

### **Douglas Trevor-Jones**

(I am grateful to **Hugh** (71) for most of the following. Ed)

Douglas grew up at Caynton Hall near Beckbury in Shropshire with his brother Hugh and sister Belinda. He was educated at Abberley Hall, Harrow School and Manchester University.

At Abberley he won the senior sports and swimming cups by large margins, setting several school records that stood for many years. In 1973 he was 400m champion at the Prep School Nationals.

At Harrow he was Head of School, a post his brother had also held two years earlier, and Captain of Athletics.

At Manchester he gained a BA in Business Studies.

He then settled in London and joined Rank Hovis as a graduate trainee, but soon realised the big corporate world was not for him. In his spare time he started his first company which made hand-crafted veneered dashboards for TVR, Aston Martin and others. The business became a full-time occupation, and such was its success that he was soon able to afford his own Aston Martin Vantage, a car still owned by his family today. He later established a further business applying special effect finishes to everyday objects such as mobile phones. In 1990 he became a non-executive director of his family's lock business, where he contributed much support and sharp insight.

He married Georgiana Wilmot in 1994 and they had a son Alexander, born in 1998, and a daughter Saskia, born in 2001. They enjoyed family boating holidays in St Mawes in Cornwall and, of course, many trips in the Aston.

In 2004 Douglas learned that he had motor neurone disease. He fought this terrible illness for five years with extraordinary courage, humour and a total lack of self-pity, which was truly inspiring to those around him. He was able to remain at home throughout his illness thanks to the care he had from all those who looked after him so well. He died peacefully at the Chelsea and Westminster hospital on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2009.

A family funeral was held at Church Preen in Shropshire, where he is buried, followed by a memorial service at St Luke's in Chelsea.

### **Jimmy McConnell**

The following are extracts from an address given at the service to celebrate Jimmy's life:

"Most people are known by only one name, but though Jimmy will have been known to most of the people here today as Jimmy, there are some in the congregation who knew him, or referred to him, by another name – "BIG BUM". He got called Big Bum by my late uncle when he was only a boy. I don't think it was a case of obesity. It was just that his posterior was, shall we say, well-shielded."

"When I think of Jimmy, I think of a great big smiling friendly man, full of merriment including a delightful prep-school sense of humour. William remembers that Jimmy, on the way back to school in the train, couldn't stop repeating over and over again his latest gem which was "Margaret Rose sat on a pin. Margaret rose." Eventually the Headmaster, who was travelling with them, could stand it no longer and said "Oh, shut up McConnell!"

"Both Jimmy and William did their National Service with the Royal Artillery and for part of the time were stationed in Edinburgh. Weekends were sometimes spent in Lanarkshire and on one occasion returning to Edinburgh, both of them on motor-bikes, Jimmy with no tail light, went in front, followed by William, who had no head light and only a bicycle light for his tail."

"Enthusiasm for absolutely anything and everything that crossed Jimmy's path or occurred to him as a potential "good idea" seemed his guiding principle. Put shortly, He had a huge enthusiasm for Life and the living of it. Ancient bangers were found and given the Jimmy treatment and, sometimes, actually worked again. I remember one such that I think William also had a hand in the resurrection process and they decided that this wreck of a car needed a completely new roof. Between them they constructed a roof of papier mache and seemed somewhat surprised when the whole thing more or less melted away after being left out in a rainstorm. Jimmy also approached driving a car with his usual enthusiasm, talking non-stop all the time; and being driven by him was the epitome of the phrase "going for a spin". Corners were a hugely enjoyable challenge and were approached as fast as possible, the car hurled round them. Having successfully got more or less round it both hands were removed from the steering wheel and waved around to emphasise something he was taking about. The steering wheel was allowed to spin madly before being grabbed again at the last second to stop the car careering across the road."

"A lady who remembers Jimmy's early days tells me that he came into her life in a big way when he suddenly arrived on his motor bike clad in black leather at the NFU office in Gloucester where she worked. She said it put up her credit enormously with her fellow typists; adding that being the attractive person he was, and a bachelor to boot, he very quickly became a well known and popular part of west country society."

"Jimmy enjoyed skiing in his younger days. He was a fearless schusser on the nursery slopes. His earliest method of stopping was to stab his ski sticks into the snow directly in front of him, but he dislocated his thumbs doing this and had to change tactics. Full of admiration for the experts who could, at top speed, come to a graceful stop with a dazzling swirl at the bottom of the hill, Jimmy tried to copy them, but it went disastrously wrong, and he scythed down a large queue who were waiting for the ski lift. It was generally

agreed that the safest thing was to ski down in front of Jimmy so as to avoid falling into what became known as elephant traps. These were the vast holes created when Big Bum's massive bulk, at high speed, crashed into the snow. "

"Jimmy stayed on in the army with a Short-Service Commission for three years after his National Service was ended. For a while Jimmy did a spell in Scotland as a salesman in agricultural chemicals, and then he became manager of White House Farm for the then owner from whom he later bought the property which had been a traditional mixed farm. In the early, pre-marriage, days the domestic set-up at White House was fairly chaotic. The ceiling of the kitchen was held up by half a telegraph pole balanced on a car jack; and his sheep dog, affectionately known as "Poor Da", used to sit beside people at mealtimes surreptitiously nibbling holes in the legs of their trousers."

"Jimmy decided to use the steep ground for growing blackcurrants and cider apples and was highly successful, playing a vital part in maintaining the health of the nation by providing the main ingredient for Ribena. Eventually, at the advanced age of 75, he went further, and became a qualified cider maker. Jimmy was sensitive to the environment and enjoyed talking to the groups of schoolchildren who visited his farm. He engineered and built a lake on the farm to assist the trickle-irrigation of fifteen acres of blackcurrants and to encourage wildlife such as ducks, butterflies and dragonflies, and trout swam in from nearby streams. When the Forestry Commission sold off the wood that sits above the farm Jimmy bought it and ensured that it was managed to the highest standards. The farm's woodlands and plantations subsequently won awards from The Royal Forestry Society of England, Wales and Northern Ireland, and from the Royal Welsh Agricultural Society."

"He was a member of the Herefordshire Agricultural Club, and a past Chairman, as well as having been President of The Monmouthshire Agricultural Show. With two other partners Jimmy formed Monnow Valley Farms, one of the first E.E.C. grant-aided farm cooperatives to be formed in the UK."

"Jimmy joined the Representative Body of the Church in Wales in 1983, and served for 20 years in various capacities, and made a most valuable and energetic contribution to the revival of the Church's funds."

"In 1991 he became only the fifth Scotsman to serve as High Sheriff of Gwent, and was appointed Deputy Lieutenant I 1998."

"In spite of being a well-built 6ft 4ins, he was light on his feet and was much admired for his graceful Scottish Country Dancing and exuberant 'whooping'. He played the trumpet, the piano, and the piano accordion, often being in demand to make music for dancing, and always revelling in the enjoyment of good company and good fun and laughter. Music meant a lot to him. Often he would sit down and play some Beethoven or Mozart, deriving great pleasure and relaxation from it. He also sang in the local choir in Monmouth and had an excellent voice."

"Jimmy married late in life, but when he did he married Judith. There she was, the last piece in his life's jig-saw. She fitted perfectly, making the picture complete and completely happy for both of them and for both of Judith's sons."

"Jimmy was a man of complete integrity, inspiring humanity, and lived his life honourably."

### **Michael Griffith**

Michael left Abberley in December 1946 to go to Eton. In his final term he was an important member of a football XI which the school magazine reported as "one of the best – possibly the best – we have had".

The following is an address given by **David Griffith** (49), Michael's younger brother, at St Asaph's Cathedral.

"Many years ago I read a book, a thriller which was set in Greece and quite exciting. I cannot remember the characters or the plot, or the author, but I can remember the title. It was called 'My Brother Michael'. This afternoon I want to talk to you for a short time about my brother, Michael, and his incredibly full and varied life.

Being born in 1933 meant that he went away to Prep School at Abberley Hall during the War. How he got there with no cars and petrol I can't remember – bus/train I suppose. Then on to Eton where he was in the Athletics Team and won the School Steeplechase and was Captain of his House. In National Service he was commissioned in the Royal Welsh Fusiliers. He then enrolled at Cirencester Royal Agricultural College – hunting as much as time and finances would allow, with the Beaufort. He also made many very good friends and those friendships have survived to this day.

In 1959 he came back to North Wales and took over the Farm and Estates. When Mike and Jill got married, they moved straight to Greenfield and Mike's lifetime priorities were established – Family, Home and

Wales. Mike and Jill had more than their fair share of tragedies with the death of their youngest son, Martin, at 1 year old and James's tragic accident in 1994.

Horses became a major pastime, not only Hunting but Point to points of which he won a number, and also Hunter Chases, completing the course in the Liverpool Foxhunters over the Grand National fences on his own horse, Canasta.

It was sometime later that Michael resolved to try and contribute to the Public Life of Wales. He realised that he was fortunate enough to be in a position to give of his time and energy and a great many organisations benefited from this decision, but it is impossible to list them all here.

He was a man of enormous enthusiasm and boundless energy and a great sense of humour. An example of this was when he introduced me to someone very recently by saying "This is my brother David. I'm older than him, but he's fatter than me." I am sure that everyone here will have their own memories that still make them smile.

Mike's entry into the public arena was when he was High Sheriff of Denbighshire in 1969, the Prince of Wales's Investiture Year. In 1973 he joined the Agricultural Research Council on which he served for 10 years. In 1980 he was appointed Chairman of Clwyd Area Health Authority until 1990 and following that was Chairman of Glan Clwyd Hospital. It was at a charity event there that he abseiled down the 5-storey building. He had a brandy in the boardroom first and was heard to remark that if anything went wrong he was quite close to A & E. In 1984 he became Chairman of the National Trust Wales Committee and served on the Executive Committee in London for 7 years.

In 1986 he was appointed Vice Lord Lieutenant and the same year received the CBE.

In 1991 Mike was asked to be Chairman of the new Countryside Council of Wales, a job he continued until 2000. His great interest in the Natural History of Wales and, of course, in farming made him an ideal choice. He also practised what he preached and created a 20 acre Wetland Conservation area on the farm. I well remember his enormous pleasure when the first pair of lapwings turned up. As CCW Chairman he travelled Wales widely and decided that he ought to know what lived below the surface of the sea off the Welsh Coast as well as above it. The Chief Executive of CCW told me that he would never have gone Scuba Diving if Mike had not gone first.

In 1994 he was given the great honour of being President of the Royal Welsh Show, a task he and Jill carried out with great distinction.

Mike couldn't resist any challenge and his enthusiasm sometimes reached a new level as when he did the highest Bungee Jump in the world of 111 metres (approx 350 feet) when on holiday at Victoria Falls in 1997. Quite mad!

He was on the British Library Board for three years. In 1997 he became Chairman of the University of Wales College of Medicine, thus continuing his long association with healthcare.

In all the jobs he did he had a great sense of duty and very high standards. He always had a smile and time to talk to everyone. As one senior person said: "We owe a lot to Michael. He shaped our lives".

In his private life he had a great love of pictures, bronzes and other works of art. He went to many exhibitions and bought very carefully.

During a time when farming was on the floor and Lloyds Insurance Market was unravelling, Mike built a swimming pool at Greenfield. My children started to call him 'Uncle Emilio' on the grounds that it must have been done on drugs money or gun running. Mike took this accusation with amused good humour.

Fairly recently my second daughter, Mouse, asked me what our family motto was. I said "I haven't a clue" to which she said that didn't think that was much of a motto for an old family! With help from Jill and Anthony I have discovered that our motto translated from the Welsh is actually 'Best Faith is Strong Faith'. I think we all need that.

Whilst I have been talking about Mike, our thoughts are also with Jill, Anthony and Clare and the grandchildren, but I am sure that everyone here knows what an exceptional man Mike was.

So I have gone from Book Title, to Motto and now to an Epitaph to say what a smashing brother he was.

"My brother Michael". "A legend in Wales in his lifetime."

### **Timothy Abell**

Timothy joined the school in 1939. He was a distinguished sportsman who played in all the school teams for more than one year. Sadly the war time magazines had to be brief, but they did show that Timothy regularly won prizes for English Lines (the learning of poetry that all boys had to do in the summer term).

He passed very well into Marlborough where he again distinguished himself on the sports fields. He kept his links with Marlborough and was a member of the Council from 1969 – 1986 and was President of the Marlborough Club in 1990. After Marlborough he went to Corpus College, Oxford, where he won his blue for hockey; he also played hockey for England. He married Philippa with whom he had three sons.

### News of OAs

(in order of leaving the school)

**1952**

**Johnny Rickett** retired from running the Union Jack Club at the end of March and has joined a friend showing selected Americans round WW1 and WW2 battlefields.

**1965**

We were sad to read that Indago Petroleum, of which **Tim Eggar** (65) was chairman, had ceased to trade.

**1969**

**Patrick Yates** is married with three children and has worked for a family owned company in Kincardineshire for 25 years.

**1971**

There was a memorial service for **Piers Throssell** at St Breward Church on Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September.

**1972**

**Nick Yates** is married with 2 children, 4 dogs and 2 cats. For the last 20 years he has been working for himself as a consultant mostly with the Oil Industry in Aberdeen. He is keen to track down **James Goode** (72); if anyone can help please let me know on [mvdh@oldabberley.fsnet.co.uk](mailto:mvdh@oldabberley.fsnet.co.uk).

**Robert Polley** is at the National Defence College in India until December. He then goes to Cyprus.

**1974**

**Ludo Graham** was the executive producer and narrator for the splendid series of programmes on BBC2 'Top Dogs'.

**Matthew Smith** is a self-employed photographer in London. ([www.mwsmith.co.uk](http://www.mwsmith.co.uk))

**Charles Ashton** has been appointed as finance director at investment bank Noble which specialises in small to mid-caps.

**1975**

**Hamish McColl** is directing Calendar Girls in the West End.

**1976**

**William Adams** writes "Thank you for your email. No more little Adams on the way, Henry is 2y 7m and a bundle of fun and I'm enjoying working from home and seeing a lot of him. I now work out in "the shed" from where I write research and give commentary on the base and precious metals markets for [www.TheBullionDesk.com](http://www.TheBullionDesk.com) & [www.basemetals.com](http://www.basemetals.com) plus I do freelance writing for one of the London Bullion banks and a metals publisher, so that keeps me busy. On behalf of the websites I also talk at various conferences around the world giving outlooks on the metals markets. We called in at Abberley last summer to have a look round the school which was very impressive and then had a picnic in the grounds with **Julian Carlisle** (77) and family."

**1977**

**Chris Shepherd-Barron** has left Imaginations and is now considering his options.

**1980**

**Daniel Crawshaw** held an exhibition of his new paintings and drawings in Hay-on-Wye in May.

**Patrick Toyne-Sewell** has been Corporate Affairs Director at G4S Secure Solutions since July 2008.

**1983**

**Hugo Del Mar** and his family have moved out of London and live near Marlborough. Hugo works for an American software company near Newbury. His two sons go to a small prep school close to home. He sees **Justin Philips** (82), **Giles Norbury**, **Wink Lockett** and **Max Askew** from time to time.

**1995**

**Harvey Flather** is marrying Vanessa Woodfine, sister of **Peter Woodfine** (91) in November. He has recently started his own business, Intelligent ID, and the website will be up and running shortly.

**1986**

**George Smeeton**, after doing an MA in Politics at York University, worked in Parliament for Don Foster, the Liberal Democrat. Now he works for Luther Pandragon, a public affairs (lobbying)/corporate PR

consultancy; among their clients are Boeing and John Lewis Partnership. He lives in Twickenham, is married to Sophie and has a young son.

**1987**

**Max Grafftey-Smith** lives in Dubai with his wife and small son. He is a partner in Green Sense Environmental Solutions LLC who are leading green technology suppliers. See [www.greensense.ae](http://www.greensense.ae)

**1988**

**Ed Corbett** is living and working in Angola where he is in charge of quality control for a construction company.

**Tom Mence** had an art exhibition at The Crown Hotel in Martley in September.

**Matthew Wells** is currently importing Log Cabins from the Baltics and Germany, and hoping the £ strengthens soon! He has another business Ag Photographic ([www.ag-photographic.co.uk](http://www.ag-photographic.co.uk)) selling specialist photographic materials and equipment, such as film, paper, chemicals, darkroom gear. He still shoots some weddings and portraits, but doesn't go looking for the weddings. He tries to shoot fine art landscapes and travel as much as possible.

**1990**

**Jamie Micklethwait** has been working for the BBC for five years. Initially he worked in TV and then moved on to run the strategy team in Future Media & Technology, the technology division which looks after [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk) and iPlayer. He was Programme Director, iPlayer platform, which means he ran the project which opens up the iPlayer technology to ITV, Channel 4 and Five and potentially overseas. He is now Head of Strategy, Future Media and Technology at the BBC. Otherwise, he is still looking for the future Mrs Micklethwait, he has retired from marathon running and is still skiing anywhere and everywhere. In 2007 he made a fabulous six month trip down the Silk Road from Damascus to Beijing (see [www.onthesilkroad.blogspot.com](http://www.onthesilkroad.blogspot.com).)

**Hugo Fleming** has started his own lighting business – Chiariscuro Lighting Design - in London, based at the Battersea Business Centre.

Sadly **Giles Badger** was unable to be at The Larrik because he was working in Bristol on a new wildlife series for the BBC.

**Jon Hickton** completed the bicycle ride from Land's End to John O'Groats and helped to raise £48,000 for charity. Now he is concentrating on the next challenge – fatherhood!

**Charlie Mainwaring** had a very unhappy time at Rugby, but then spent a GAP year in Australia where he had an amazing time and regained all confidence. He read Business Studies at West of England University where for a year he shared a flat with **Giles Badger**. He spent part of his degree course time on placement to South Africa where he worked for South Africa Breweries selling beer to the Africans (“not difficult, but hard work and an amazing experience.”). In 2002 he moved to Ireland where he runs a company called Newpark which manufactures car park revenue control systems (the pay stations you see at shopping centres, airports etc.). He is married with one daughter.

**Francois Bazin** writes: “What a surprise to see you on Facebook.(many OAs have expressed similar surprise. Ed).This has made my day. I was just looking over some of my old texts with my wife a few days ago with the comments "Excellent work - see Mr. Haggard"

Let me see, since leaving Abberley, I completed my high school at Trinity College School in Ontario, Canada. I then completed my Mining Engineering degree at Queens University in Kingston, Ontario in 1999. I have been living in Australia ever since graduating. I now work as a Mining Engineering consultant and live in Brisbane with my wife and two children.

I am still in touch (on and off) with **Andrew Barker** (91) - you may remember that we were inseparable as pupils!”

**1991**

**Michael Tomlinson** is on the Tory list of candidates for the next Election, but he has not yet got a constituency to adopt him.

**Guy Adams** is living in California for two year working as *The Independent's* LA man. He got married in the summer at home in Wales.

**Alex Draper** still works for Metamorphose, but is in Chicago setting up their US operations. The company teaches adults in big business how to run their businesses better. After graduating in Geography from West of England University he considered teaching as a career – but thought better of it! He plays rugby for Chicago Riot Rugby.

**Oli Horton** has been promoted to Sales Supervisor and Team Leader at Trailfinders in Bristol. He has recently been mountain biking in the Alps with **Ed Brown** and his wife.

## 1992

**Ben Champkin** is Head of PE and in charge of cricket at Horris Hill, where Paul Stevens and Paul Nutsford, both ex staff, are also teaching as Head of Mathematics and Director of Music respectively.

**James Maclean** writes: "I am working for KPMG in Sao Paulo, Brazil, doing International Financial Reporting Standard conversions for international and local banks. It has been an interesting experience so far. Sao Paulo is a vast city with plenty of energy and seems to be doing well in this global crisis. So it is probably a good time to be here and not in London."

**Algy Brinton** has his own photography business in London. See [www.algybrinton.com](http://www.algybrinton.com).

**Hugo Legh**, after getting an MA in Politics at Edinburgh, was Senior Accounts Manager for Connect Public Affairs until 2009. He is now manager of Burson-Marsteller – also a Public Affairs company.

**Antony Eden** is appearing in 'The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe' in Stoke-on-Trent.

## 1993

**Francis Moore** has moved on from ING and is now working as a freelance corporate finance consultant and is finding it very refreshing to be working in a much more entrepreneurial way. "Life and work are both busy, but rewarding."

The Army having refused to have him owing to his hayfever and mild asthma.

**Christopher Hunter** went to Bristol University and read French and German. After a spell with a German financial advisory practice in the UK he is now an independent financial advisor and a senior consultant at AFH Group in Bromsgrove. His wife was about to produce their first child when I was corresponding with him in May.

**Will Morgan** is Director of Offshore Consulting (Guernsey) Ltd, a Consultancy/Recruitment/Training business in Guernsey. He is married with two children.

**Jules Hartley** got married in September in Australia. He works at Collier Capital as 'Technical Design Authority' (but Jules does not appear to know what this means!).

## 1994

**Bevan Fleming** has returned from Columbia and is cooking in a new Japanese restaurant in Cirencester.

**Rupert Corbett** works for The Carphone Warehouse in London. He says the rapid and successful growth of The Carphone Warehouse makes it an incredibly interesting place to be. "I am enjoying the work, learning plenty and making the most of living in London."

**Alex Donnelly**, in spite of his blindness, has been doing a 'Dry Stone Wall' course, successfully, having recently finished a sculpting course. He has applied to do an MA(?) in Tehran and has been awarded a scholarship. However, there may be some 'political' difficulties with living in Tehran after his 'accident'.

## 1995

**Oliver Gibson** writes: ". Hope you are well. It is great to catch up with you. In quick summary I studied Philosophy at Newcastle University and achieved 2:1 BA Hons. It was a very interesting degree and I thoroughly enjoyed living in Newcastle. I am now working in Canary Wharf for a property firm called Jones Lang LaSalle. I have somehow ended up working in Procurement but I am thoroughly enjoying it and I am close to achieving a Chartered Institute qualification (CIPS). I still play some rugby and I am still training regularly with a Judo club in London having now achieved my black belt. I remember really enjoying the Judo at Abberley but only started training again, after Shrewsbury, at the university Judo club. I would love to visit Abberley again soon as I still have many fond memories. Thank you for letting me know about the OA gathering and I hope to meet with you again soon. I'm pleased to hear that Abberley flourishes - especially the rugby!"

**Michael Dyer** left Michael Page International in 2008 and is now working for Fortress, a Hedge Fund based in Mayfair. Long term aims are to contact clients in Europe so that he can make use of his languages, but at present he is learning the business.

**Chris Sawtell** has completed his ACA qualification working at PwC. He has not been doing much sailing since representing GBR and captaining his university team for two years, but is keen to get it back up and running again. His landlord in Balham is **David Opperman** who also works for PwC, currently in Australia.

**James Everard** is Marketing Manager at IT Sphere and a Marketing Consultant at Sununu in Muscat, Oman. Previously he was Project Manager at Dunning and Everard Ltd, and before that he was a shepherd at Rosedale farm.

## 1996

**Jonathan Blott**, after graduating in Product Design and Engineering from Aston University, has been working at C&S Survey Solutions Ltd since 2006, training as a Land Surveyor

**Noah Phillips** works as a distribution planner in San Francisco.

**Alex Walters** writes: "After graduating from Bristol I worked in the City (which I hated), lost my job, and so decided to get out of the country and went snowboarding for 3 months in Chamonix. It was absolutely unforgettable. While I was out there **James Bailey** offered me a job running the surf school that he now owns in Morocco. While I was there, I was offered another job working on a film they were making out in the desert: Ben Hur!! I have effectively spent the last 2 months running around the desert in a toga/armour! Have a browse through my more recent photo albums (on Facebook)- all the photo evidence you need is there. I am back home now and trying to work out a way of getting back into the film industry - is going to be a fun few months I think."

**Tom Attlee** writes: "After Monmouth I went to Plymouth University and studied Chemistry although I haven't put it to use yet! After uni I went travelling to New Zealand for a year then to Australia for 10 months Canada for 8 and India in amongst working as a builder at home and during my travels as it proved easy to get a relatively well paid job. Currently I'm concentrating on my mountain bike downhill racing with an aim to qualify for the worlds... however I am at a dilemma with biking or snowboard instructing in Canada as a career after qualifying during my stay or getting stuck into a chemistry related career as I'm not as young as I used to be and getting a fair amount of hassle off the parents! I think an active outdoors job would suit me better than being stuck inside with a white coat on, but I'll have a better idea of what I'm doing with myself after this race season has finished. I will have to check my diary when I get home (I'm currently training in the French Alps) whether or not I'll be able to make the 8th, racing is taking up most of my free time at the moment."

**Mark Clemmow** is an airline pilot working for Cathay Pacific as a 2<sup>nd</sup> Officer. He has bought his own property in Hong Kong and is likely to be living there for the next 8-10 years.

**Oscar Pearce-Higgins**, having graduated from Exeter, is now doing a postgraduate course at Oxford.

**1997**

**Will Hicks** has been a designer for the Penguin Group since 2007.

**Finan Letts** has been an account executive for CHI and Partners in London since 2007.

**Tom Homfray** has done a year of his Law conversion course at BPP; when the course is complete he will join SJ Berwin on a training contract in March 2011.

**Tom Heber Percy** writes: "I am incredibly impressed that you are on Facebook; my parents are still struggling with a computer mouse; their ineptitude would try even Mr Bailey's patience. Unfortunately I was made redundant when New Star AM crashed and was sold, but in the interim I have passed some more financial exams and am now looking for a new position still within finance. I will definitely subscribe to the OA group and try and get to the Larrik on the 8th September. I was sad to read that Mark Stubbs had moved to pastures new from Abberley, he was a phenomenal Latin teacher and it was down to him that when I arrived at Harrow I was in the first set for the subject!"

After studying Architecture for six years at Edinburgh University, **Simon Johnson** won a scholarship from the Royal Scottish Academy to work in Florence for three months. He is now working for Herzog & de Meuron in Basel, Switzerland.

**1998**

**Tom Hughes** graduated in Property Agency and Marketing from the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester, and in May is starting a job as Assistant Estate Manager near Marlborough.

**Jordie Laurence-Jackson** has completed an HND in Sound Technology at Truro College and works from home in St Ives.

**Max Folkes** ran safari companies in South Africa, but is now working with his father in Ireland where he lives.

**Craig Wood** works for the Worcester Cricket Board as the Chance to Shine Manager. In the summer he is a full time cricket coach in local schools in Kidderminster.

**Will Hargreaves** has completed a MSc in Marketing at Oxford Brookes.

**James Walters** writes: "Since Bristol I've done an array of things. Internships at JPMorgan, Terra Firma and Newton. Then took some time off from boredom of job hunting and went to Oz for an 'extended break' and ended up in India to write about the IPL cricket for the Hindu newspaper and do some cooking at The Taj Coromandel in Chennai; "I managed to play some cricket as well which was fantastic." I returned home beginning of the summer, predominantly for the Ashes cricket but also for a job at SSY doing ship broking starting next week. Great to hear from you and hope you are well, we'll have to catch up about all things OA at the Larrik.

**Ralph Windham** has a degree in Zoology from Oxford University.

**Henry Grant**, having graduated from Nottingham with a degree in Electrical Engineering, spent a year traveling and is now making use of his degree working on a graduate scheme for Nokia, based in Waterloo. The work involves developing new technologies for mobile phones and fixing problems with old ones!

**Tom Legh** is a Compliance and Ethics Analyst at Christie's. It was good to see him at The Larrik in September.

#### **1999**

**James Davis** is working as events manager at Norwell Lapley Events – doing weddings, parties, corporate, Product launches, marquees, catering, entertainment etc. from invitations to the clear up.

**Tom Worsley**, since graduating from Bristol in 2007, has been working for ITV Sport in London.

**Nicholas Tsang** is studying at the Academy of Contemporary Music in London. He says "I am very laid back and I get excited by pretty much anything. I bumble around London playing Guitar. I've been lucky to have worked with some amazing artists." See [www.myspace.com/snakesbum](http://www.myspace.com/snakesbum).

**George Sampson** is working in London for Man Group in the Equities Division.

**Henry Adams** was unable to attend the Larrik gathering because he was in Argentina designing a house and artist's studio.

**James Booth** has graduated in Botanical Sciences from Manchester University. He is now working as a business consultant in Abu Dhabi where he is also learning to be a financial consultant.

#### **2000**

**Will Tudor** is training to be an actor at the Central School of Speech and Drama. He is also singing and song writing.

**Rory Way** has completed his five year Masters degree in Product Design Manufacture at Loughborough (getting a 2.1) and is now working as a Design Consultant for Roke Manor Research in Southampton, which is a Siemens Company doing research and development – mostly for the MOD and various security agencies. "The company is based in a wonderful manor house with modern buildings behind and also has tennis courts, a football pitch, gym, bar and access to the River Test for fly fishing and sailing."

**James Smallwood** graduated in History from Oxford Brookes in 2009 and is now studying at the College of Law (Moorgate).

**Charles Underhill** graduated in Photography from Portsmouth University and is now a partner in VV Photography in Chichester.

**Tom Shuttleworth** is at Bath University.

**Mimi Rothwell** is at Bournemouth University.

**Charlie Cooper** got a qualification in Construction from Worcester Tech and is planning on becoming an Architect or a Quantity Surveyor.

#### **2001**

**Sam Frazier** has completed his degree in Economics with Business Studies at Oxford Brookes.

**Laura Godman** is at Leeds University.

#### **2002**

**Tintin Sampson**, after serving his time in Iraq, left the Army and is now studying Land Management in Cumberland and Sweden.

**Alexander Rennie** is reading Economics at Royal Holloway University.

**Ryan Cox** is reading Criminological and Forensic Psychology at Bolton University.

**Freddie Wilson** is at Bristol University.

**Tom Banks** is in his second year at Cardiff University reading Medicine.

**James Holloway** is studying at The RAC, Cirencester.

**Harry Young** is at Bath University.

#### **2003**

**Jack Frazier** spent six months in Canada during his gap year and then did a road trip around Europe with **Tom Studd**. In September he starts reading Construction Management at Oxford Brookes.

**Ashok Sethia** is in his first year at Edinburgh University.

**Callum Booker** is in his second year at Newcastle University.

**Charlie Watkins** is at the University of the West of England.

**Polly Parker** is reading Art at Leeds University.

**Tom Studd** is reading Marketing and Business at Newcastle University.

**Addy Lawson** is at Exeter University.

**Phoebe Scriven** is at St Peter's College, Oxford.

**Olivia Crellin** is at Clare College, Cambridge.

**Lydia Lloyd** is at Cardiff University reading English Literature and History.

**Emily Oyston**, having done her A levels at Kirkham Grammar school. IS AT Leeds Metropolitan University.

**James Duncan** is at Leeds University.

**Laura Smallwood** is at Kingston University.

**Becky Stirling** is reading French and Management at Reading University.

**Laura McKenzie-Wynn** applied to read Mathematics and Archaeology and Anthropology at Keble College, Oxford.

**Danielle Thirsk** is at Loughborough University reading English and Drama.

**2004**

**Oliver Fowler** is reading French at Exeter University.

**Stephen Craigen** is reading Music at Trinity College, Cambridge.

**Harry Wills** is a fresher at Bath University.

**Ed Wilson** is in his first year reading French and Italian at Bristol University.

**Jack Hughes** left Shrewsbury after GCSEs and went to Truro 6<sup>th</sup> Form College to do A levels. He is now at Royal Holloway College reading French and Drama.

**Conrad Griffin** is at Peterhouse College, Cambridge, reading History and Russian.

**Amber Dixon** is studying at The London College of Fashion.

**Viola Crellin** is studying at the University of The Arts, London.

**2005**

**Lawrence Beesley-Peck** is studying Maths, Physics and Chemistry for A level (when he has time from his other interests!). He is a keen runner, climber and member of the RM CCF. He completed the Three Peaks Challenge in May as a member of the Malvern CCF team which was one of only five of the fifty teams competing to complete the challenge (there was appalling weather at the top of Ben Nevis). He is a member of the Malvern Pringle squad which came second in the national competition run by the RM. Recently he has completed his first half marathon.