

NEWSEMAIL JANUARY 2012

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

All the items below appear in the latest OW newsletter just published on the OW website: www.rgsow.com If you have not been on the website recently, you might wish to do. On it you can see a data-base of OWs, including a list of those OWs abroad, the last 50 newsletters, reports of events, lots of photos, lists of famous OWs, Sporting Internationals and lots more besides.

THIS IS THE YEAR!

In 2012, RGS will be celebrating the 450th Anniversary of receiving the Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth I

The RGS has planned an events calendar to mark this milestone year for the school and hope to include as many members of OWs as possible.

EVENTS

Tues. Feb 21st RGS in Oxford. A chance for alumni in the Oxford area to meet in Pembroke College.

Sat Feb 25th Service of Thanksgiving at All Saints Church in High Wycombe.

Mon Mar 12th A talk by Philip Barker, OW and Broadcaster, on the Olympics and the RGS in the Queens Hall, at the RGS.

Fri Mar 30th OW Rugby match at the RGS

Sat May 5th Family Day & Fete at the RGS

Thurs June 4th Golf Day at Lambourne Golf Club

Fri July 6th Gala Ball at the RGS

Wed July 18th Charter Day Opening of New Buildings

Sat Sept 8th OWS' Dinner and Art Exhibition.

Sun Sept 9th Gala Concert

Oct Lecture by Prof Laskey, eminent OW, who won the Royal Medal in 2009 for his work in the field of DNA & cancer

Sat Nov 3rd. OW Lodge meeting in the Queens Hall

Dec Carol Service

If you are interested in any of the above events, please contact Monika at the Development Office at the RGS: mxd@rgshw.com for full details

**PLEASE VISIT OUR 450 MICROSITE <http://www.rgs450.com>
FOR FURTHER DETAILS OF ALL THE GREAT EVENTS!**

In it you will find details of key dates in the History of the RGS, which is fascinating. Also keep looking at the 450 Microsite over the year for updates and details.

How can you help?

If you would like to assist the planning of our 450th Anniversary year in any way, or have contacts who could help us, please get in touch with the Development Office.

WELCOME, MONIKA.

Monika Dankova joined the Staff of the RGS before Christmas, with particular responsibility for the OWs, OW events and communications with OWs. If you have any questions about the OWs or want to pass on any information about yourself or other OWs, please contact her mxd@rgs.com

OW GOLF

Robin Dorkings (1957-1963) organizes the OW golf match against the RGS Staff. Traditionally this is held towards the end of June. He hopes to organize another Match for OWs this year. If you are a golfer and would like to play in a match, please contact Robin. robin@dorkings.fsnet.co.uk

NB the Golf Match, advertised above, on 4th June.

A REUNION OF OWS WHO WERE AT THE RGS 60 YEARS AGO

"For the 7th time in the past couple of years a small representative group of the 49ers descended upon the Polecat in Prestwood and once again took over a corner of the bar/restaurant. Seldom have 2 1/2 hrs passed so quickly! We enjoyed a decent lunch and the conversation flowed from the outset and covered:- putting the World to rights, England's dire performance in the rugby World Cup, the current lamentable form of Wycombe Wanderers, good old RGS days, girl friends from the 1950's and the hope that modern medical science was moving fast enough to provide enough spare parts to keep us all going!"



Those in the photograph are from L to R are John Read, Bill George, Tony Barr, Roger File, David Wiltshire, Terry Williams, Sir Peter Fry (enjoying the moment) and Rennie Vickers.

DAVID JONES



As we reported in the last newsletter,
David Jones died in the Autumn.

Here are some extracts of some of the
comments from OWs:

It is with sadness that I am emailing you now, after just hearing about the death of David Jones. "Benny" was one of the teachers that made a huge impression on me during my time at the RGS, and I still remember the last history lesson that I had

with him before he retired. My class had rallied together to buy him some leaving presents, in the form of some fluffy dice for his car (I seem to remember that he had a VW Beetle) and some chocolates, which he went ahead to share with the class. I distinctly remember that his method of teaching was like no other, using artwork in the form of stickmen to teach about history. I still have my history exercise books from when I was in 2C.

Outside of the RGS, I would talk to David quite regularly when he came to use the library, and he was always a very pleasant gentleman. I had in fact been wondering where he was, as he was quite a frequent visitor to the library. Personally I am going to miss him, but I am very sure that his memory is going to live on in a lot of people.

Rob Andrews

David Jones - his best were "million pound players" in the late 70s. What would HE have been worth at today's transfer values?

Peter Price, (1976-1982)

Really saddened, to hear that this 'gentle man', has passed away. I came into RGS as a sixth former, in 1977 and as a 'new boy', I remember fondly, what great encouragement and confidence he gave me. My B grade in History, was largely down to his fantastic tutoring and wonderful manner. R.I.P.

Best regards **Kevin Baxter**

That was sad news to hear. I had lunch with him about 3 years ago having seen his name on the school website. An enormous number of boys were helped by him certainly me at A level history and an O level in economics which was taught in his own time to me and to Tony Dingle. Rumour had it at the time that DJ had had a breakdown and his presence at RGS was yet another of those amazing decisions of Boss Tucker, who read people so cleverly. He was still living behind the hospital where he lived with his mother and father in the fifties. Most days he went up the Amersham Hill to take Mervyn Davies for a walk, as he was blind by then. He still had a VW in his garage, but not the one that he bought to learn to drive in. That was blue and I used to sit beside him sometimes, so he could practice with his L plates as I had a licence.

Ralph Stockwell 1954-1961

Although all the masters at RGS taught us their subjects, few taught us lessons for life; but Benny was such a man. I recall our first history lesson with him in the 1st year sixth form. He swept in bearing three newspapers - the Star, Daily Express and the Times. He read us three articles dealing with a clash between North Korean gunboats and a South Korean trawler. He told us that it had happened yesterday, and was already 'history'. The accounts ranged from 'justified North Korean protection of territorial waters against capitalist spy ships' to 'unwarranted attacks on innocent South Korean fishermen'. Then he asked us what did we believe was the true account? Finally he warned us that we should always check our sources before forming an opinion about 'history'. He was a great teacher.

David Neill

David (Benny) Jones' passing is a sad loss. He was a formative influence on the lives of many of his students and certainly he was on mine. He had been a schoolmaster fellow at Churchill College, Cambridge in about 1966 and he encouraged me to apply to that group of Cambridge colleges. I recall the care and consideration with which

David marked essays. His neat hand expressed politely the comments and criticisms. He made one think carefully about what one said and how one best advanced an argument.

David Levin Q.C.

I was saddened to hear about 'Benny'. It was he who encouraged me to take up economics, which he taught at 'O' and 'A' Levels to mere sprinkling of pupils - in 'Stage Left', in the Old Library, and in the Prefects' Study at the end of the ground floor corridor of the main building. Towards the end I was in fact the only student, but it didn't seem to bother him, and he taught me a lot. I liked his soft voice and gentle persuasive manner. He would listen to one's opinions, but wouldn't budge an inch from his own, and was very convincing. I shall always remember him with gratitude and affection.

Mike Coles

David Jones not only had a positive influence of many hundreds of students but also the teachers, who were lucky enough to have worked with him. He will be sadly missed by many.

Chris Betteley

A David Jones story - what a brilliant, dedicated teacher he was - had him as a teacher and tutor ... and cricket umpire.. I was playing cricket for the first eleven. My first game - against Abingdon school. I was extremely nervous, which is not good when you're bowling wrist spin. David Jones was umpiring. I kept bowling rubbish and was about to be taken off. Then I got one right - and appealed for a hopeful, dodgy LBW. Umpire Jones raised the finger. My first wicket! It was - to say the least - a bit iffy. I settled down, got some confidence and a few wickets. On the coach home I suggested to Mr Jones that it wasn't quite out. He smiled and said nothing. I wanted to thank him, but, of course, couldn't. There was no question of cheating - it was near enough - but he could see that it had been a huge moment in my school life - and much more. A wise decision. What a great man!

Ian Whittham (1956-1963)

I might be misremembering this anecdote, but during the Cuban Missile Crisis in October 1962, I was in the library and suddenly the Lower 6th history set appeared there. They had been quietly told by Benny to go to the library because there was little point teaching history at a time when there seemed little hope of a future.

Jim Scouse

I am very saddened to hear of David Jones's death. He was without any doubt an RGS legend. I first came across him in 1974 teaching the history/legal bit of World Studies, a course done at that stage by 4X/4Y in place of Geography and History "O" levels. Inspired by this, I proceeded to do modern history "A" and "S" levels under his guidance. In the sixth form I would often go and have a chat with him during my private study periods; I'm sure he had better things to do, but he always had time for his pupils. I vividly remember him telling us, probably circa 1976, that the British Labour party would split, the Soviet Union would break asunder and Charles would be the last king of England. We will have to wait to see if the third comes to pass as the first two did. One often hears people describing some of their teachers as being an inspiration for life. For me David Jones would come firmly and irrevocably into that category, and I am sure I am not alone in that. May he rest in peace and rise in glory!

David Ballance 1973-8

There are more comments about David Jones from other OWs of the post-1970 generation in the latest newsletter on the website.

CAMBRIDGE DINNER.

On Monday 21 November 2011, a mix of Old Boys and current pupils arrived at St Catharine's College, Cambridge for the RGS Cambridge Dinner, which was revived this year in order to celebrate the dinner's 50th Anniversary. Old Boys in attendance ranged from those currently studying at the University to those who remember the School during Mr Tucker and Mr Morgan's 'rule'.



DO YOU RECOGNISE A FUTURE STAR GOLFER?



This was taken by Martin Berry on a YHA trip.

MEMORIES OF THE RGS 1941-1944

I was in the Science Sixth so the Chemistry and Physics lessons took place in the laboratories. Maths, pure and applied was in a form room, but our base was the library. The other lessons were English twice a week and French twice (only French to English translation). I joined a Science German class mainly to avoid for ever the dreaded football. All I remember is "Hier ist ein Bild. Das Bild zeigt ein Schloss", all in that awful Gothic script.

Before Christmas I volunteered for duties at the Post Office to help with the Christmas rush. I was mainly sorting letters and packages, as my knowledge of the country gained from studying Bradshaw helped. On Christmas Eve I was delivering letters. We had an ATC dinner and entertainment that week.

1942 For some time I had been taking a packed lunch (known to the head-master as "nose-bags") to school, but, as food rationing was getting more severe, I started having school dinners in Jan 1942. As I was table monitor, I sat near the kitchen and frequently had second helpings. One regular pudding was a very hard type of shortbread which we called "concrete". Sometimes I went to the British Restaurant in the Town Hall. 3 courses for 1/- (**Ed.** 5p in today's money). We called it "The Ritz".

The ATC took a major part in my spare time. Many sessions were in practising the Morse Code. There were social evenings on Thursdays and occasional church parades and visits to Booker Airfield. My first flight was in a Magister trainer there and I had the controls for a few minutes. My first camp was at the Bomber Command Station at Waterbeach Cambs. For a week we lived in the barracks and took part in some of the activities. One night we watched the Stirling bombers set off on a raid.

In August 1942 I went with a school party to a farming camp at Haversham in North Bucks. and spent my 16th birthday there. We went by lorry and lived in tents in the school grounds. Most of the work was in stooking sheaves of wheat or in muck-spreading. At one farm I was asked to drive a tractor and on letting in the clutch for the first time it shot forward and the farmer fell over - into the manure! There was a plague of wasps around the school and I got quite experienced at killing them. Someone bet me sixpence I couldn't kill 100 in half-an-hour. I took him on and it

took me 34 min, but he was so impressed that he gave me the 6d. My method was to have a little jam at the bottom of a jar and kill them whilst feeding. One night it rained so hard that we had to abandon the tents and move into the school. Coming home, I cycled to Aylesbury and thence by train.

On Oct 13th a party visited the House of Commons where the one and only Communist MP was pointed out to us. Afterwards to a show with Vic Oliver in the lead.

I was enrolled as a cycle messenger for the Civil Defence and on Nov 1st there was a trial run at the Council Offices. I was not called but they let off a tear gas bomb and I forgot to take my gas mask, so just sat there weeping for 30 minutes. 2 flights from White Waltham Aerodrome the next day.

My voice had broken so I sang bass in the school choir (although most of the time I was accompanying). We joined with girls from the High School to perform extracts from the Messiah at the Parish Church.

1943

Regular fire-watching at school. The squad was one teacher and 2 boys and there was always stiff competition to be on duty with the only young female teacher - Miss Killick! We were paid 3/- per night, but my diary often records 2/11d. Perhaps a penny was deducted for cocoa and biscuits. The striking mechanism on the school clock was disconnected for the duration. One night we went exploring in the attic and I tripped over a wire and the clock chimed at mid-night!

Several flights with the ATC in a Tiger Moth, an Oxford, an Anson and a D.H.Dominie. Peter Gatfield from my class was killed in a crash, when flying from Booker and our parents had to give permission for further flights.

On April 13th. the sky was full of Stirlings, Halifaxes and Lancasters on a mass air raid of Italy.

On June 5th the ATC held its first Social and Dance. Records were used, but when no record was available, I played the piano for the Paul Jones, the Veleta and the Okey-Cokey etc.

The Higher exam. was in the 1st 3 weeks of July. My 4 main subjects were Applied Maths. Pure Maths. Physics and Chemistry with French at subsidiary level. I passed all subjects, but my standard was not high enough for a scholarship to university. I was only just under 17 at the time, so another year in the sixth was worthwhile.

I went up to Cambridge - Caius College - to take a scholarship exam. I didn't do very well as it seemed to be aimed at Public School pupils. Went to Waterbeach airfield at the weekend, to see the Stirling bombers again.

An ATC visit to Bovington USAAF was memorable for the food. Fruit salad for the first time for years!

In the 3rd.year VIth. 3 of us decided to take Chemistry at subsidiary level only, so we did not attend the chemistry lessons, but spent the time in the apparatus room at

the end of the lab. We did some very interesting experiments including these 3 outstanding ones:-

1. One should NEVER dilute concentric sulphuric acid by adding water to it. So we put some conc.in a flask with water in a dropping funnel leading into it. The water dripped down and suddenly the funnel flew up to the ceiling and smashed.
2. On mixing some organic chemicals in a beaker, they ignited with a pillar of flame up to the ceiling. Afterwards there remained a sponge-like black cylinder about 3 ins.high and 4 ins. in diameter. We put it in the school museum with a label "Carbonifera Priciensis" (Joe Price being the chemistry master). He spotted it, guessed we were responsible and was very impressed.
3. Finding that mixing something with ammonia, we found it gave off intense smoke, so we got a bucket when the lab. was empty, and poured vast amounts in. The lab. soon filled with smoke which poured out and filled the Great Hall and half the school. We then saw a mortar board through the smoke, and a voice said "Come out of it wherever you are. Is this a Papish plot to assassinate me?" It was the Headmaster!

Again to the House of Commons with the VIth form. We saw the King and Queen and the Duke of Gloucester.

1944.

School was more serious now with the all important Higher exam. in July. I cut down on fire-watching, but on one of the few nights there was an air raid warning from 2 - 3am and we had to be on the alert.

Then to ATC camp at RAF Hunsdon, which was a night fighter base engaged in intercepting the V1s. We were up half the nights at airfield control, interrogation, guard duty and Flight control. I had a 17 minute flight in an Airspeed Oxford and took control for a short time.

Finall the Higher results arrived at school on Sept 1st and I was awarded a Bucks County Council Scholarship at £100 a term, so I rushed up to City & Guilds College South Kensington and enrolled for the Civil Engineering course.

Ed. For those of you at the School in the War, you will no doubt have similar memories. There does not appear to have been Health & Safety in those days!!

Many, many thanks to the OW, who sent this in. Very unfortunately I have lost the name of the author. My profuse apology to him!

LETTERS/EMAILS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Ian,

A Memory I have of "Sam" Morgan was one day when a teacher was late for his class which occupied the classroom next to "Sam's was, when one boy was standing on the teacher's dais holding forth, "Sam" marched in and commanded "park your bum, Willie". I have never forgotten the phrase and have found it useful on several occasions

**Ed Perkins. Melbourne. Australia.
RGS pupil between 1952 and 1957**

Ed: Anybody remember any other of Sam's expressions or phrases?

Dear Ian

Recently I saw Geoff Warner who was in my form throughout my career at the RGS. As time was approaching Remembrance Sunday, it came to our minds that we were sure an OW lost his life serving in the RAF in the Aden area in the late 1950's/early 1960's. I had a name in mind but I didn't mention it. A few days later Geoff emailed me with the name I was thinking of: Bachelor. Are we both mistaken? Does anyone have any information or another name? After all, if we are correct, the name ought to be recorded on a memorial.

Regards

Andrew MacTavish

Ed: Can anybody confirm the name or suggest another one?

Dear Ian,

This mismatch of dates on School's main building has bugged me for the past 64 years, and since there is a perfectly good foundation stone built into the wall at the main entrance, indicating the 'new' building as 1914, the date under the crest should be '1562', and not '1914'. I do not know the estimated cost but I have pledged an amount to start the fund.

Terry Williams

Ed. Isabella says "we will need about £750 for the recarving of the plaque on the main block!

Interestingly, when Bekonscot model village reopens in the spring, you may wish to look out for the model of the school's main building there.... I believe it will read "1562" on their version of the stonework!"

Dear Ian,

A snippet from The Times Obituary column of 25.11.11 you might find interesting.

Basil Jones, Canon Emeritus writes:

I was a school chum of John Neville at Chiswick County School for Boys in 1941, then sharing the premises with The Royal Grammar School, High Wycombe. He was in the school play that year and played the part of Brutus in Julius Caesar. I was Mark Antony and I have dined out on it ever since. That production

reflecting parallels with Nazi Germany was in the hands of Mr Garlick (English) and Mr Kichen (History), who I am sure encouraged

John to seek a theatrical career which he did with such renown.

Presumably the 'sharing' Canon Jones refers to is some Evacuation Arrangements during the War Years.

It would be too much to ask if anyone can recall John Neville after all these years. After all, he would need to be in his mid eighties now, and the vagaries of memory ..

However it is a little intriguing to think one of the greatest Classical Actors of our times, once graced our stage with his budding genius.

Regards,

Bob Barlow (1957 - 62).

WERE YOU AT THE RGS FROM 1958-1967?

If you were, **John Saunders**, who runs a website for OWs (1958-1967), is writing to you:

The 2011 RGS High Wycombe Old Boys' Dinner took place in Sept and I have posted a few photos on the RGS Old Photos Forum:

<http://www.rgs.saund.co.uk/bb/viewtopic.php?f=6&t=112>

If you join the forum (free registration), you can add your own commentary to the photos. It would be particularly helpful if you could add any names I have missed.

This is one of my periodical reminders of the existence of my **RGS Photos website** (<http://www.rgs.saund.co.uk/> and in particular the 'What's New' page - <http://www.rgs.saund.co.uk/whatsnew.html>) which you have been so kind as to support with info and encouragement. It is still going strong and features photos from 1958 to 1967, photos of various sports teams and classes, scans of Grey Books, Speech Day programmes, etc. I'm always looking round for new items to display - any old RGS-related images and documents welcome, either as scans or originals (which I can scan and return).

John Saunders (1963-70)

WERE YOU AT THE RGS IN THE 1950s?

If you were, **Tony Hare**, who runs a website for OWs leavers of the 1950s, is writing to you:

Firstly can I wish you all a very Happy Christmas and hope you have all had an enjoyable 2011.

Thank you so much all who have contributed to [my website](#) this year, especially to those who have taken on the task of looking after particular pages,

I would also like you to join me in showing appreciation to Ian Clark for his "[official OB's website](#)" and also to John Saunders for his [parallel website](#) for younger "boys" and his work in keeping our [Discussion Forum](#) alive. Please make it a New Year's resolution to visit and contribute to the forum discussions.

As I keep telling people, it's incredible to realise that I left RGS a few years before the 400th Anniversary and so missed the Queen's visit, and yet here I am 50 years on and still around to witness the 450th! What's the chance of me being here for the next biggie? Queenie's not too badly either, is she?

Now that we have all those cold winter evenings to look forward before the warm weather returns, put the memory in reverse and click on to <http://www.rgs.tonyhare.co.uk> and find yourself in one or more of the photos. Then look for as many familiar faces as you can and send me a list.

Have a good poke around while you're there. With about 150 pages of photos, reminiscences, Gilbert & Sullivan programmes you should find something to interest you.

Tony Hare

RGS WEBSITE

If you have not recently looked at the School website, you may enjoy looking at some of the items. The 2011 School magazine is there, as well as a Virtual Tour of the School, with a series of pictures of the various parts of the School, that might bring back memories. www.rgshw.com

FAREWELL

It has been a great pleasure to me over the last 10 years to be in email contact with a good number of OWs, meet OWs at Dinners and other Reunions and give some OWs tours round the School buildings. It has been great to see the number of OWs we are in contact with grow from 1200 to over 3,000, and to see the development of some sporting reunions. I have decided it is time, after publishing 50 newsletters on the website, and sending out a good number of newsemails, to call it a day.

I am sure that Monika and Isabella, who work at the RGS, will keep you well-informed of all the OW & RGS events and that the OWs will go from strength to strength. I do thank Martin Berry for all his wonderful work on the website, David Stone and Robin Dorkings, who run the golf and hockey events, Tony Hare and John Saunders, who run their own OW websites and to others of you who have regularly sent in your own contributions to the website. Many, many thanks!

May I wish you all individually much, much happiness in the years that lie ahead!

Ian Clark

SOME FINAL IMPORTANT REMINDERS!

If you do not at the moment receive emails and letters with news of the OWs and RGS, please send your name, dates at the RGS, and your postal & email address to Monika mxd@rgs.com

If you change your email or postal address, please let Monika know. mxd@rgs.com

If you have any queries about OW events, please contact Monika. mxd@rgs.com

If you know of any OWs, who are not in contact with the School, please encourage them to contact Monika mxd@rgs.com

If you would like your details to appear in the data-base on the website, or update those that are already there, please email Martin Berry, dmartinberry@googlemail.com

If you are able to help track down the "MISSING OWS", listed in the website, please contact Monika mxd@rgs.com

If you would like a Tour of the RGS, I would be very happy to meet you and show you round the RGS. Please email ianrclarkuk@yahoo.co.uk