



# OLD BLUES NEWS

Annual newsletter of the Reading Old Blues Association · No. 64 · 2015

## Calum pictures success

Old Blue Calum O'Flaherty (2012) was highly commended in the 'endangered' category of the Marwell Photographer of the Year competition with this impressive photo of a 12-week old amur leopard cub called Kanika.

He waited several hours for the picture, taken with a Canon 700D. It was also People's Choice runner up and is being used by Hampshire County Council in a countywide publicity leaflet.

Calum hopes to compete in other competitions and has applied for a Masters in Animal Conservation at Southampton once he completes his geology degree at Leicester.



## Diary dates

**AGM** Sunday, 8 February,  
11am with refreshments

**Daniels Cup Football**  
Sunday 9 March, 10.30am

**Annual Dinner** Sat. April 25,  
see the Old Blues' page at  
[www.rbc.org.uk](http://www.rbc.org.uk) for tickets

**Old Blues Reunion Day  
& Daniels Cup Cricket**  
Sunday 21 June

Moving away? Know someone  
who wants to join the Old  
Blues? Email [mlt@rbc.org.uk](mailto:mlt@rbc.org.uk)

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Harry plants the last poppy. Photo © Andrew Smith

## School news

**Year 9 pupil, Harry Hayes, 'planted' the last poppy at the Tower of London memorial on November 11. The following day Harry, who lives in Sonning, was splashed across the front pages of *The Times* and *Daily Telegraph* in his CCF uniform.**

The poppy represented the 888,246th soldier to die in the First World War. Harry said afterwards: 'It was an amazing experience! Harry's great, great, great uncle was a soldier who died just weeks before the conflict ended.

A new five-year RBCS Development Plan has been released to the Staff by the Bursar and includes proposals for a new Design Technology Centre, tiered theatre, and landscaping of the School grounds. Its implementation depends very much on the local planning process.

Congratulations to a record number of students who achieved the school's highest ever percentage of GCSE A\* to B grades (93.2%). In all, 22 GCSE candidates attained all A\*s and As. In addition, 24 out of 118 A-level candidates achieved all A\*s and As, with 41.7% of the year group's results at A\* to A grades.

Leaving staff in July 2014 included **Paul Bodinetz** (joined 1971), **Andrew Pett** (1977) and **Jenny Blair** (Maths teacher who joined in 2001). Also, **Izzy Pease**, Assistant Bursar since 2000, left in August.

## In memoriam Nick Siney

**With sadness, we report that Nick Siney (1948) died on Easter Monday 21 April, 2014 leaving his widow Sheila, and two sons, Phillip (1983) and Mark (1985). In his time, he perhaps contributed more to the School and to the Association than any other. He is greatly missed.**

This is an edited version of a tribute paid by Peter van Went at the funeral on 9 May, 2014.

Nick was a man who could light up a room the moment he entered it. He loved life and lived it to the full, spreading happiness wherever he went. A loving and devoted family man married to Sheila for 50 years, he had a life-long dedication to his school of which he became a governor; he had



Nick Siney (1948) at the open day in 2013

a passion for sport, especially cricket and had a long career in the building industry. He had a lifelong affection for Sonning, where he grew up. In 1948, Nick joined the School as his father before him had done. He rapidly made a name for himself as a born actor and keen cricketer who captained the First XI in his final year.

Nick and I both shared the experience of performing in the late Frankie Way's meticulously choreographed School drama productions. Everything was crafted to the highest standards with much improvisation. Female roles, in the best Shakespearean tradition, were typically played by the boys. Nick had the uncanny knack of landing many of these parts, cutting a fine figure in the process and his performances were always well-received. One critic observed, 'Siney as Sheila was the practical lady who wasn't going to let anyone get in her way. Here was sparkling humour; here was fine acting'.

With 'Mick' Bertram and Maurice Edelston, an English amateur international, as his mentors, Nick's cricketing prowess rapidly won him praise. 'Siney provided the speed attack and bowled well as captain', according to one report; 'always a lively and enthusiastic leader'. Seldom did he miss the annual Daniels Cup matches playing in many and always giving encouragement to younger team members. For Nick,





enjoyment and team spirit were everything: winning was a bonus.

It was very fitting, too, that his long campaign for an up-to-date pavilion should achieve fruition in the form of the brand new building he opened in April 2008 in memory of his old friend and fellow cricketing enthusiast, John Southall.

On another occasion, Nick's legendary eye for a ball served him well. During a school trip to Switzerland in the 1950s, one group leader wishing to exhaust the snowball fanatics still further, offered a much sought-after cash prize for the 'best snow-baller' of the day. In the ensuing mêlée, the Headmaster's alpenstock was flung light-heartedly on to a massive overhead cable. There it rested obstinately and precariously and utterly immovable. After a fusillade of snowballs had failed to dislodge it, Siney saved the day, bringing it down with a well-aimed direct hit, and won the prize!

Nick, a past president of ROBA, was especially proud to be invited to serve as a School Governor and Foundation Trustee, responsibilities he undertook over 26 years. With typical self-deprecation, Nick often made light of his own importance, confiding on more than one occasion, 'When parents come up to me and ask all sorts of academic questions, I have to tell them, "Drains and sewers are my job"'. Such modesty seriously undervalued his wise counsel, attention to detail and an unrivalled knowledge of the Holme Park estate, drains and all. As Chairman of the Governors' Building Committee, his 'hands-on' approach proved invaluable as the 1980s and 1990s ushered in an unparalleled succession of building developments. Indeed, Nick's expertise was called upon frequently as (various building) materials and designs came under ever-increasing scrutiny from Borough Council planning officials.

Paying tribute to Nick's work in this area, former Chairman Brian Walsh said, 'He brought to the Governors not only his valuable experience but also his considerable wit, his trademark red socks, and above all, a determination to uphold the traditions and values of the School. It came as no surprise to learn that when he was at School he was awarded the Plumb Cup 'for service to others'.

Reflecting on the blessings so liberally bestowed on us by Nick's warm friendship, may we with one accord say, 'Well done thou good and faithful servant'. May you rest in peace.



## The mysteries of masonry

**Secret handshakes and special signs passed between police, judge and criminal, mysterious initiation rituals involving violence and humiliation, ancient ceremonies that can never be discussed with outsiders. All a part of freemasonry?**

An evening at the School's masonic lodge on Friday 13 June set out to correct some of these time-honoured and headline-grabbing notions and to emphasise the positive benefits of joining the School's own 40-strong lodge, where, for ancient reasons, steak and kidney pudding is always served and there are never, ever, any speeches.

With 93 masonic lodges in Berkshire alone, it is scarcely surprising that masonic language has entered our everyday speech. Assuming they are not 'blackballed', masons can expect to be given the 'third degree' as part of their formal progression through the organisation. Contrary to popular belief, freemasonry is quite open about its practices and membership is not limited to white Protestant males. There are Sikh, Muslim and Jewish masons and one order of female masons filled the Albert Hall when it celebrated its centenary in 2008.

The Aldworth Lodge meets four times a year at the regional



centre for freemasonry at Sindlesham, near Reading. After a formal ceremony, members enjoy what's called 'festive board' and the opportunities for convivial socialising the meal provides.

Membership of the Aldworth Lodge costs £120 a year and each of four annual formal dinners is £21.50. Masons give widely to many different causes, and are second only to the National Lottery in their generosity. What makes freemasonry different from Rotary and the Lions is that it is based on three 'Grand Principles' of Brotherly Love, Relief and Truth, which are taught by a series of ritual dramas using the tools and ceremonies of a stonemason as symbols.

The Lodge is a regular benefactor of the School, granting some £10,000 in 2013. Thanks to Paul Chastleton for information supplied.



## Old Blues help the library

The Old Blues' Association has always been a generous supporter of the School library and grant monies are gratefully received and acknowledged. The library intranet area continues to be developed and one section is reserved for sound, academic e-databases to enhance online learning. This year, the Old Blues have enabled the Library to maintain its subscriptions to the following databases: Chris Way (English) – Living Language and Literature Online, Literary Reference Centre, E-Mag (aimed at A-Level students); Pougher (Chemistry) – Science Reference Centre and Science in Context (11–18 age range). Print stocks are not neglected, however, and other purchases were made for other



The retirement of Paul Bodinetz and Andy Pett was marked by a special cricket match

departmental, and general, areas. The photo shows Mr Aran Maddocks, Head of French, admiring resources bought for his subject. **Darka Luxton**

## School sports facilities available to Old Blues

Old Blues are able to use the School's excellent Fitness Suite and Tennis Courts. The facility is not available to immediate family or friends. Hours: from 6pm, Monday to Friday during term-time, and from 7am to 10pm at weekends and holidays. Please contact the Sports Facilities Manager, Chris Bate, at [cbate@rbc.org.uk](mailto:cbate@rbc.org.uk) or (0118) 933 5895. Annual membership to the Fitness Suite is currently £35.00. Tennis courts are available for use by Old Blues when not required by the School or outside organisations. Use of the courts can also be organised through Chris Bate.

## Andrew Pett

**Andrew (aka Village, The Doctor, Harry Petter, Pettafix) answered the call for a dynamic, energetic teacher of Economics back in 1977 or AD2 (two years after Derek Cotterell).**

He initiated the Economics A- and O-level courses and taught Junior Maths and History. A keen sportsman, Andrew coached cricket throughout the School, running and coaching teams of all age groups including the 1st XI for many years.

If seven years of cricket under his

tutelage was not enough, former students as Old Blues would be drafted in to play regular Sunday cricket for the Old Blues XI, for which Andrew was captain and fixture secretary (despite not being an OB himself). His fanaticism for cricket unsated, Andrew took on the poisoned chalice of staff cricket captain and coordinator. An *Aldworthian* write-up of these games gave us a glimpse of the inimitable style of writing that we have come to expect from him. Readers would become quite competitive, trying to fathom who the various nicknames referred to.

U15 cricketers may also remember the tours to Yorkshire that Andrew and a colleague used to arrange. In 1984, Andrew was approached to run a School Young Enterprise company by an interested student, and was the School link teacher until retirement. Meeting every week to produce and sell products and complete all the paperwork needed for a limited company, Young Enterprise companies have been an important feature of the Sixth Form co-curriculum. An avid skier, Andrew participated in countless school ski trips both as an assistant member of staff or as party leader.

In those days of limited alcohol allowance for students on the trip, there were moments that he would rather not recall and are best left for moments of nostalgia of those involved...if they can remember them. An avid and once okayish golfer, Andrew entertained the staffroom with countless moments of embarrassing golf stories and featured on many staff golf tours, but nothing quite matches the rearrangement that he made of Richard Shuttleworth's face at Blue Mountain GC...although hitting parked Volvos and breaking house windows comes close.

In the 80s, Andrew took over Hall House





Former Bursar Colin Pierce and Adam Hill (2004)

## Reunion day success but rain stops play

The heavens may have opened causing the cricket to be cancelled but the annual reunion day was enjoyed hugely by Old Blues from the 1980s and by those from before 1960.



The Norkett family



Nicola and Paul Mascard (1980)



Cricketers undaunted by the downpour



Peter van Wierit with Jason Crompton (1982)





as Housemaster – in his own words, ‘The best job in the school’, where one only ever had to deal with the positive side to RBCS students. Hall was highly successful during his reign, although even he would not be immodest enough to claim credit for that. In 1997, he took over the role of Senior Housemaster and thence became the legend that he is. In a desperate attempt to make the reporting of over 150 House events interesting to the 700+ listeners at the end of each term, Andrew cloaked the results in a short story of Harry Potter, Doctor Who, Star Trek, Asterix, James Bond or Bridget Jones’ Diary. Songs would be made up for leaving House staff and fun poked at staff no matter how exalted in status; even his own children were not exempt – being described as ‘genetically perfect’ – and boys were warned that meeting the Petts was a fate worse than meeting the Fockers. Under Andrew’s leadership, Economics thrived at RBCS. His enthusiasm for the teaching and learning of the subject led to many students going on to university to study Economics itself at some of the most prestigious institutions.

**Kerry Bayliss**



## Paul Bodinetz

**1971 saw a number of remarkable events: Great Britain embraced decimal coinage, Idi Amin seized power in Uganda, the Open University started, The Commons voted for Britain to join the EU, Arsenal won the Division 1 Championship, and then defeated Liverpool for the FA Cup, and Paul Bodinetz had his first day at RBCS.**

In the following 43 years he took myriad roles, but none more important to him than teaching English. It was his driving force, and something that even in retirement, he has not relinquished, as he has taken up a volunteer lecturing post with the WEA (Workers Educational Association), to spread further his knowledge and love of literature.

A conservative estimate would be that took 1,000+ boys through O-level

and then GCSE, and a similar number through A-level; astonishing figures. That daily contact with pupils was, as he said himself, what kept him young. Paul is the last of a group of English teachers, including Maurice Sheen, Peter Firebrace, Richard Line, Paul Holleley and Sally Lambert, to announce his retirement.

What a formidable department that was, and what a legacy they left! Asking colleagues in the staff room for their reaction to Paul’s imminent retirement, there was a genuine feeling of warmth towards him, and there were certain words that kept reoccurring: ‘friendly’, ‘professional’, ‘decent’ and ‘extremely bright’, were repeated over and over again. Paul is a ‘communicator’ who has the great skill of being able to listen, not just hear. His intellect is legendary and on such a range of fronts: literature, film, theatre, sport (especially his beloved Arsenal and anything cricket), art, architecture, and wine, and woe betide anyone who risks taking him on in a crossword competition.

He is also a compendium of the most risqué jokes ever told, with an insatiable appetite for more! In his time at School he coached the 1st XI at cricket, ran football teams, was the Head of Department, the External Exams Officer and a Sixth Form tutor, and he raised two fine sons, both of whom were pupils at the School and have now moved onto bigger and better things.

One of the more prestigious titles that Paul held for a number of years, was that of Registrar and it was he who formulated and established the clear guidelines by which prospective pupils were selected for the school.

Paul helped to lay the solid foundations that see the Reading Blue Coat School in the rude health we now enjoy. As a trusted friend and loyal colleague, Paul was much in demand as a sounding

board. Often, one would find him ‘in conference’ with a younger member of staff, not necessarily from his department, sharing his expertise and considerable experience, always with care and kindness, and never with a hint of arrogance.

I can write on this matter with personal knowledge; more than 20 years ago, I was new to the School, and it was Paul who guided and advised me when I needed it; for that alone, I am immensely grateful. People talk of the ‘pleasure’ of knowing Paul.

Paul left us to quench his cultural thirst, visiting galleries, theatres and museums, and to further enhance his already capacious sporting knowledge at Lords and the Emirates Stadium. There is an idiom, that ‘...boy X is a true Blue Coat boy...’, well I would suggest that if Paul were cut in half, he would be like a stick of seaside rock, with ‘Blue Coat’ running through him. ‘He is a true Blue Coat man!’

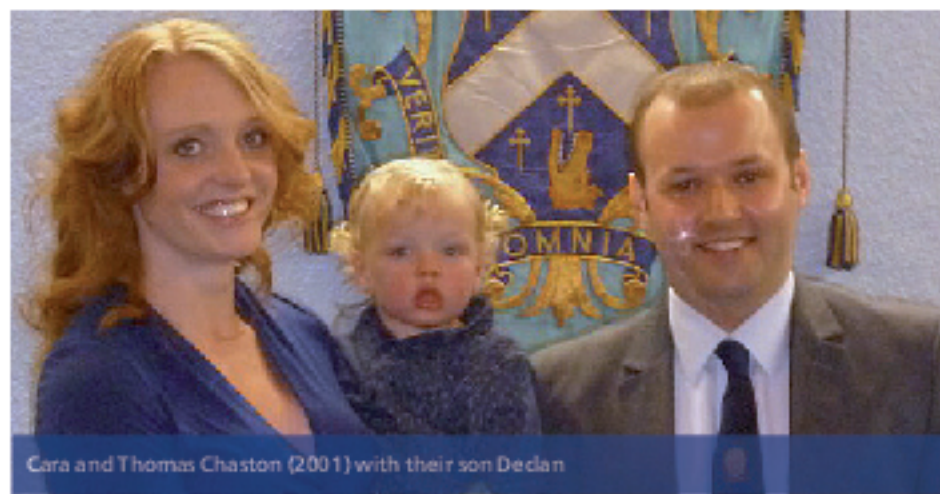
**Duncan Selvester**

## Lodge honours Old Blue

**On 6 December, 2014 the Aldworth Lodge installed a new Master for 2014–5.**

Maurice Little, who is well-known to older Old Blues, has taken up the reins for a second term. He has a busy year ahead of him. That same evening the School’s Treble Choir – led by Jonathan Bowler and Lizzie Burrowes – entertained the Lodge, parents, family and friends, and the selection of carols, hymns and songs and prose was much appreciated. This annual event marks the start of the festive season for School lodge members.

At the end of the evening the Jubilee



Cara and Thomas Chaston (2001) with their son Dedan



Award was presented and this year's recipients were **Thomas** (2001) and **Cara Chaston** for their work for cancer charities including the Bracknell Cancer Clinic. Thomas and Cara married in January 2012 and in March 2013 were delighted to learn Cara was pregnant. However, just three days later, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. They faced an unknown future not even knowing if the pregnancy could continue. Thankfully, after treatment, Cara was cancer free and a proud parent. She and Thomas received remarkable care from the Bracknell cancer clinic and, by way of thanks they and a group of friends raised over £6,000 for the unit and for cancer research. Since then, both the Aldworth Lodge and The Berkshire Masonic Charity have made substantial donations to enhance Thomas and Cara's fundraising.

## Obituary

**John Kingston** (1953) died suddenly of heart failure aged 76 whilst on holiday with his family in Sri Lanka. He was the youngest boarder on the School's first day at Holme Park on January 21, 1947, Bernard Inge's 44th birthday. John much enjoyed sport, including cricket and football, with Maurice Edleston, the popular and celebrated Games Master. Our condolences to his wife Anne, to whom he was married for 52 years, and to daughters Sally and Libby.

**Nigel Pyne** (1991) died as a result of a motorcycle accident on May 16, 2014 aged 38. He was the son of Old Blue Derek Pyne.

**Royston Randall** (1959) passed away at his home in Sidmouth on 30 July 2013, after a short illness, always very proud of the School and The Aldworth Lodge of which he was also a member. In *The Aldworthian* at the end 1959, Randall was mentioned twice once showing his O-level results and the other an observation from Blue Coat English Master Chris Way: 'Royston Randall, who, viewing the wire guards over the Cricket Pavilion windows outside, decided to break one from the inside.'

**Tony (AP) Stock** collapsed and died while outwalking in May 2014. Our deepest sympathy to his widow Jill (née Inge and family). He was a Chemistry teacher and Boarding House master between 1964 and 1969 before going on to teach at Bablake School in Coventry (a Blue Coat foundation).



We record with sadness the death on November 22, 2014 of former teacher of maths **Max Gray** (1971-94). We extend our deepest sympathy to his widow, Eileen and to his family. He succeeded 'Mick' Bertram as Head of Mathematics in 1988 and was responsible for many A-Level classes. A keen Arsenal supporter, he was also a bridge player, skier and jazz enthusiast.

Former Speech and Drama teacher **Dawne Vincent** died on September 9, aged 86, following a fall at her home in Emmer Green. Dawne was an enthusiastic supporter of Blue Coat's drama productions for many years.

## News of Old Blues

**Kate Ashcroft** (2010) graduated from Portsmouth in 2013 with a degree in Sports Development. After working at a media agency in London, in June 2014 she went to America to work as a sailing instructor at a summer camp in Pennsylvania. On return from America, she began a PGCE in Secondary PE at Bath Spa University.

**Tom Barnes** (2011) has been awarded a Scholarship to study a two years Masters in composition and screen at the Royal College of Music.

**Christopher Best** (2002) (son of former staff member Graham) has recently been appointed head of the history department at Bradfield College.

**Sebastian Brock** (2000), **James Harper** (2003), **Piers Daniell** (2000) and **Neil Gourlay** (2000), amongst others, took part in a two-day 'Entrepreneurs in Action' conference for Year 12s at the School. After a day of speakers on themes including personal branding, leadership and digital footprints, the second day consisted of team exercises in entrepreneurship.

**Nick Buckle** (2010) won a bronze medal as part of the GB Lightweight Men's

IV at the World University Rowing Championships in Gravelines, France, in September. In January, Nick took up a six-month rowing coach position at Wanganui Collegiate School in New Zealand. Last year, he and a friend competed in an Iron Man Triathlon event to raise money for the Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation, and the year before they did a half Iron Man to raise money for Prostate Cancer research. They're now planning to cycle from Paris to London on Boris bikes to raise money for Cyclists Fighting Cancer. Nick was also the winner in last year's Reading Santa Run. Current Blue Coat teachers James Leigh and Gemma Higgins also took part.



**Shamus Butt**, former Deputy Head Boy (2013), has received an unconditional offer to study medicine at Bristol.

**Russell Cook** (1977) ran three marathons in Rome, London and Edinburgh to raise awareness of rare blood diseases and bone marrow donation. See [www.facebook.com/groups/3Marathonsfor3Transplants/](http://www.facebook.com/groups/3Marathonsfor3Transplants/) for more.



**Elliott Cox** (2011) joined Championship rugby club Nottingham in June 2014. He told the press: 'It's a big step up, but I'm going to train hard to get myself to where I need to be and hopefully I'll get the opportunity to perform.' After leaving RBCS for St Paul's, he was part of the London Irish Academy and plays mainly at full back. He has also excelled at tennis and football and was described by his old club Redringsians as 'a strong, tall and quick young man, with heat hands'.





**Hannah Hughes (2013)** successfully re-created author Laurie Lee's lengthy trek across Spain, described in his 1969 memoir *As I Walked Out One Midsummer Morning*. Hannah was also featured in a Radio Gloucestershire programme about Laurie Lee.

The journey took in Madrid, Toledo, Cordoba and Seville amongst many other memorable Spanish cities. Hannah has travel-writing ambitions and describes her adventure at <http://hannahandlaurie.blogspot.co.uk/>

'Back home everyone seems to talk about the future and dream about how they want to live their life but here I'm meeting people who are actually just doing it. University still seems like this safe option. Even though I know I really want to go; sometimes I can't stand the thought of it and other times I think I just want to do degrees for a decade and then be a dusty old professor'.

'I'm starting to realize that everything, in some way, is a bubble. A nine till five job, university, family, school, friends etc. I understand for sure, but I know now that to think travelling is an escape from the bubble is wrong. Travelling is a bubble, a really nice Lenor one, where you get to be at your most free moving and passionate and have deep conversations with relative strangers because you're on this high ball of emotions and experiences. I know now the difference between inspiration and enlightenment, and I think a lot of people travel to become 'enlightened' when in fact, travel alone can only inspire'.

Hannah's trip raised almost £750 for Amnesty International.



**Tim Darvell (1984)** and friends raised £2500 in September for Beating Bowel Cancer. They climbed Mount Snowdon; 'the most amazing day, a truly unbelievable experience'. Tim is also creating a book to raise funds for the charity <http://livesandtimesbook.blogspot.co.uk>. His mother is battling with the disease, which is the third most common type of cancer, with around 1.4 million new cases worldwide each year.



**Rosemary Davies (2005)** has been much enjoying her work for Disney, starting with a few years in Disneyland Paris performing in parades and shows, and followed by a contract to be the opening cast for Tokyo Disney Resorts, 30th anniversary last year. After a contract extension, she finishes in April.



**Natalie Dormer (1999)** who features in *The Hunger Games*, is to take the lead role in *The Woman in Red*, a new BBC costume drama. She plays Lady Worsley, whose very virtue was put on trial in a 1782 court case that shocked the country. Described as 'passionate and courageous', she chose to leave her husband, Sir Richard Worsley, to elope with his best friend Captain George Blisset. Sir Richard brought a £20,000 case against his former friend for 'defiling his possession': his wife. Natalie appeared in Lone Scherfig's new film *The Riot Club* which came out in September and also has a continuing role as Margaery in the TV series *Game of Thrones*.

**Brigadier Angus Fay (1982)** was appointed Assistant Chief of Defence Staff (Logistic Operations) with the rank of Major-General in November 2014.

**Frank Glasspool (1959)** has recovered well from a recent knee replacement operation, perhaps the result of years of OB football matches! He is already managing to play a reasonable round of golf and a few ends of bowls.



Old Blue James Callender (2005) welcomes RBCS naval cadets on board HMS Illustrious



**Matt Grey** (1988) has designed and launched a 'storytelling bus project' at [onceuponabus.com](http://onceuponabus.com), specially developed to allow young people to enjoy and explore the magic of storytelling in an interactive, immersive environment. Designed, inside and out, to deliver an out-of-this-world experience, the storytelling bus will transform learning into an unforgettable adventure... This innovative venture features a custom built bus and is Matt's joint project with his wife Arti. The bus mostly visits UK primary schools, but Matt also hopes to develop one for Uganda.

**Stephen Harridge** (1983) took a PhD at Birmingham and is now researching muscle function in his post as Professor in the Department of Physiology at King's College, London.

**Jonathan Haynes** (2003) appeared in Ray Cooney's farce *Out of Order* at the Mill at Sonning. He was married at St. Andrew's church, Sonning in April 2013. He has also been teaching drama part-time.

**Edward Hicks** (2009), who continues his D.Phil studies in History at St. Anne's College, Oxford, appeared on University Challenge in August and also found time to assist with the coaching of a School public speaking team, which visited Hong Kong in October.

**Richard Higgs** (2009) qualified for the British Triathlon GB Team for the European Championships to be held in Spain in October. This will be a huge challenge for him as he moves up through the various categories in the competition. He also came a very impressive 9th in 2014's Triathlonlonguard Windsor Triathlon, in a time of 2 hours 7 minutes. Second Master Russell Slatford, in his second triathlon in a week, came 586th out of approximately 1400 (men) in 2 hours 38 minutes.



**Andy Lee** (1993) the School's CCF Adjutant and OC of the Army Section, left Blue Coat for Switzerland.

**Lucas Lowe** (2006) graduated from Keele University with a degree in Biology, which was swiftly followed by an



Allie Matchwick (2006) at TRUST Children's Home in India

## Allie the vet's helpful travels

**Allie Matchwick (2006) studied at Bristol and Liverpool for six years and now works in Newbury, as a small animal vet at Falkland Veterinary Clinic, where she has a particular interest in surgery.**

Since 2010 Allie has also been active as a volunteer for The TRUST Children's Home in rural Tamil Nadu, India. The home was set up by Dr P. Thirumaran after the 2004 Boxing Day tsunami, to look after children made destitute or orphaned by the disaster. It has since taken in others who have no alternative means of support. The home makes no distinction between religions or castes which are still an issue in rural areas, despite legislation.

Around 40 children are provided with food, shelter, clothing, education and a programme of activities including sewing, computing, taekwondo and dance, by a small group of support workers. A local ambulance service, blood donations, adult education projects and a village school are also provided by the charity.

Allie writes: 'Volunteering is a great opportunity to be involved with the children and any of the projects and each volunteer trip can be tailored individually; I spent time with a local vet and in a government hospital, both eye-opening experiences. On return from my first trip to India I helped set up the TRUST UK support group. TRUST has no government funding so relies solely on donations from local and worldwide supporters and the support group helps to collect and send funds from the UK. It has been fantastic to be involved with such a small charity and volunteering is made so special by the charity's founder and his family: you are fully immersed in Indian life'

The charity is looking for volunteers for placements of between two weeks and three months, for any age from Sixth Form upwards; the placements are usually for one to three volunteers. Contact Allie at [alliematchwick@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:alliematchwick@hotmail.co.uk). See [www.trustchildren.org.uk](http://www.trustchildren.org.uk) for more. Allie would also be happy to speak to anyone who is applying or considering applying to vet school.

international work placement in Kenya for seven months. After returning home and coming to terms with the fact that marine conservation research in the UK

just isn't as fulfilling as in the Indian Ocean (to say the least), he set out along a new career path as a Wealth Manager with leading provider St. James's Place.





Oliver Perry's prize winning 'Decoding Spectral Resonance for the Uninitiated'

**William Mansell** (2014) was awarded the David Pearson Memorial Travel scholarship in July to visit St. Petersburg and study a school of 19th century Russian artists. In September, he began a degree course in Architecture at Newcastle University. For the first time, a new Runner-up prize was awarded to **Freddie Clark** (2014) to study Spanish in South America.

**Jay Jay Merrall-Wyre** (2009) is working as a junior account executive for a PR company in Regent Street after being awarded a first in Marketing at Portsmouth University.

**Rob Miller** (2009) has been working at The Crown in Playhatch. He returned from his travels to Asia, including Myanmar, and is applying for jobs in mining, or as a second choice, the oil/gas industry.



**Alan Orr** (1986) spent May to December last year on a 'Pilgrimage of Peace' from Jerusalem to Canterbury. [www.pilgrimageofpeace.org](http://www.pilgrimageofpeace.org). He also published and wrote a free book *The Natural Mind – Waking Up* and is a vegetarian chef.



**Emily Padfield** (2010) wrote a prize-winning essay during her third year at medical school at the University of Bristol. The citation reads: 'She focused on a novel treatment for paralysis which challenges our understanding of rehabilitation. An excellent, quirky and intelligent essay in line with Arthritis Research UK's health promotion aims.' The topic combines neuroscience, orthopedics and surgery. Emily hopes to continue research into this topic in the US in a year's time and would be delighted to help Sixth Formers prepare for medical school.

**Will Padfield** (2014) is attending the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, where he is studying conducting.

**Matt Parker** (2010) was awarded a First Class Honours degree in Lighting Design and Technology at the University of South Wales (Glamorgan).

**Guy Pawson** (2009) graduated *cum laude* from Harvard last autumn. Aretia Franklin sang the national anthem at the graduation ceremony, George Bush Snr. was awarded an honorary doctorate and there was a speech from Michael

Bloomberg. He was hoping to start at Sandhurst this January.

**Aruna Pawson** (2012) has completed her second year at Cardiff reading Archaeology: she is off on a month-long dig in July to Çatalhöyük in Anatolia – one of the most interesting sites for early human remains in Europe. Then she heads to Kuala Lumpur for a seven-week internship in Hotel Management, which is a possible career option she is considering.

**Richard Perrient** (1963) returned home to Canada after A-levels in 1970. He qualified as a clinical psychologist in Ontario, working with young men who were in prison for the first time. He soon discovered that his psychological interventions came too late in the prisoners' lives to be of benefit. In Vancouver, British Columbia, he worked with street youth before joining what is now the Ministry of Children and Families as a member of a child abuse team. Last ly he found his niche in the Vancouver School Board working with high-risk children aged 5 to 12 years. He marvels at the changes to the School and looks forward to this newsletter!

**Oliver Perry** (1992) took first place in the Cubism section of the American Art Awards in September, a yearly competition which has been running since 2008. Oliver has been painting full time for eight years, balancing his art work with occasional jobs as a creative copywriter. Previously, he has exhibited his work at galleries in New York, Budapest and London.



**Alex Ranken** (2004) won a BroadcastTECH award in November for Young Producer of the Year. Alex obtained an MSc in Science Media Production from Imperial College and has recently finished working with David Attenborough on an ambitious and pioneering 3D Sky TV programme



called 'Conquest of the Skies'. His award nomination described how Alex overcame new technical challenges with highlights including 'extraordinary 3D flying shots of a million-strong bat exodus from a giant cave'.

**Edward Reeve** (2013) has released three discs of 'Great organ works' recorded on the Willis organ of Salisbury Cathedral. Ranging from Bach to Louis Vierne, the recordings include almost all of the most popular works for the king of instruments. Edward has begun his degree in Music at Queens' College, Cambridge and gave his first recital there in the College chapel in November.

**Tim Richardson** (1986) is a consultant to Henley's 2015 Chelsea Fringe Florilla Festival. The Chelsea Fringe is an alternative garden flower initiative promoted by the Royal Horticultural Society, which runs alongside the Chelsea Flower Show. Wikipedia describes him as 'the world's first international confectionery historian'. His father was a dentist. He also writes about gardens, landscape and theatre, and contributes to the *Daily Telegraph*, *Country Life*, *The Idler*, *House & Garden*, *Garden Design Journal* and *Wallpaper*.



**Dele Rotimi** (1990) wrote with best wishes to all his contemporaries. Dele is a proud ex-boarder who was sent to RBCS direct from Nigeria. The boarding house was very much home to him. He was the only black boarder for his whole School career! Dele says peers who remember his trips to the housemaster's office for the 'slipper' will be astounded to hear he is now Assistant Headteacher at a Church of England school in Hackney. Influencing life chances in a school recognised by the Mayor of London as being in the top 50 most improved in the capital has been immensely satisfying. Delighted with the School's progress, he raised a festive glass to it and his old band of brothers in the boarding house!



Peter Jarrett (2010) on the summit of Mt Elbrus

## Peter gets to the top

**Peter Jarrett (2010) graduated in business management at Birmingham last year and is now working as a marketing intern at GlaxoSmithKline. He writes here about his epic climb of Europe's tallest mountain.**

Having reached the summit of Kilimanjaro in the summer after my GCSEs and after a successful ascent of Mont Blanc in July 2013, I decided to go to Russia in July last year to make an attempt on Mount Elbrus (5642m), in the Caucasuses – Europe's highest mountain and my second of the world's seven continental summits. Apart from making it to the top in one piece, the whole trip was actually a complete disaster for me; but interesting nonetheless. Not a day went by without some kind of issue, hurdle or suspect activity.

There were various unforeseen surcharges along the way: I was met by a guide unable to speak English who was later unable to accompany me to the summit or lead me down again due to altitude sickness; every minute spent in a vehicle was genuinely terrifying; and, to top it all off, I got detained on the way home as a cancelled flight meant my visa had expired.

Still, the mountain and the Caucasus range were stunningly beautiful. The climb is not technically difficult, with only one fixed rope section near the summit, but is physically very demanding and incredibly cold. The summit day involved an early morning 3am start in -22°C and 1900m of ascent from the Barrels Huts at 3700m to the summit at 5642m. With Elbrus towering well above its surrounding mountains, the view at the top was utterly breathtaking and well worth the 9-hour slog.

I have since spent two weeks in the Swiss Alps with a friend, where unfavourable conditions denied us an attempt on the Matterhorn but did reward us with a number of other 4000m+ peaks as a consolation. I intend to return to the Alps for a third time in the near future but my long-term ambition is to return to the Andes and have a go at my first 6000m+ peaks.

**Rob Sillitoe** (2010) graduated from University of Surrey with a first class degree in Business Management in July 2014. Rob joined Microsoft UK on their

global graduate scheme as Technical Account Manager. The role provides much national and international travel, which is proving to be very enjoyable.





**Alex Tsaptsinos** (2013) is now a Blue of a slightly different hue as he's been playing midfield for Oxford University's first football XI.

**Josie Wallace** (2011) is congratulated on achieving a First in Philosophy at Southampton.



**Lewis Ward** (2013) has enjoyed a remarkable footballing year, after having signed his first professional two-year contract with Reading FC in July. In April, Reading FC U18s made history by reaching the semi-final of the Youth Cup. Goalkeeper Lewis made many crucial saves through the rounds and won two penalty shootouts. Reading narrowly lost the two leg semi-final. The final leg was at Craven Cottage and televised live. In October Lewis had his first taste of the adult game after he went on loan for emergency cover to Whitehawk FC in Brighton to cover two FA Cup games due to injury and one of Whitehawk's goalkeepers being cup tied. He is now training with the U21s (reserves) on a regular basis as well as with the first team occasionally.

**John Whitworth** (1968) and his wife, Benedicte visited the School last year. They were over from the USA for their son's wedding. John is a former Head of School and was amazed at the changes.

**Emma Wilkinson** (2010) decided during her first year at Cambridge that she really wanted to study English instead of French and Italian. In 2013, she became very involved in drama, both

as a producer (including managing the Footlights 2013 International Tour) and a director, and has spent much of 2014 involved in three major productions. She was invited to direct the Cambridge University Opera Society's main show, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, which was staged in February. As her father kept telling her, it's a notorious graveyard for directors, and perhaps not the ideal option as a first foray into opera. It ran for four performances to about 1700 people. Her next main show was directing *The Tempest* for the CUADC in the ADC Theatre at the beginning of May. It had the largest single piece of set ever built in the theatre: the fo'c's'le of a masted ship. The third of her directing projects was the Pembroke Players' Japan Tour in September/October. In addition to the usual directorial tasks, this involved ensuring that *The Merchant of Venice* could be performed by ten actors in a variety of venues in Tokyo and Yokohama (as well as Ely Cathedral and two Cambridge runs), with sets and props that could be transported by the cast and crew solely by Japanese and English public transport. She has also been Treasurer for the Cambridge Footlights Society this year.

**Matt Wilkinson** (2008) followed his degree in Philosophy at Bristol with seven months working and studying in Prague, and returned in April 2012, having decided that Psychology was where he felt his career should be. He completed his MSc Psychology in September 2013, having already started a full-time post as an Assistant Psychologist with the NHS. He found his work, first with the Hillingdon Drug and Alcohol service and then with their Criminal Intervention team, both fascinating and challenging. He was then fortunate to be accepted on the NHS-funded Doctorate of Clinical Psychology programme and is now based at the Salomons Centre for Applied Psychology in Tunbridge Wells, with placements in various locations across Kent. He still finds time to meet up with many of his RBCS friends (especially **Henry Wickham-Smith**).

## Former staff news

**Thea de Boer** the School's former nurse (1995-99) wrote with fond memories of her time in Sonning. She went on to work for St. Joseph's College in Ipswich, from which she retired in 2003 to go back to the Netherlands for her 'lazy

grey-haired days'. She has four sons and five grandchildren still in the UK.

**Sally (KS) Lambert** (1980-2013) has taken a break from retirement and recent globetrotting to take up a temporary 'supply' English teaching post at Oratory School.



**Maurice Sheen**, Boarding Housemaster and teacher of English (1978-91) was awarded the CBE for his services as Chief Mentor to the Afghan National Army. He holds the rank of brigadier and had been called out of retirement in 2012 to set up a Sandhurst-type academy for officer training in Kabul. Previously, he had been on active service in Iraq where he had set up a similar academy in Baghdad. Although Maurice has 'officially retired' from the regular Army, he is very much involved with Army charity work. He was a guest at the CCF Biennial Inspection on May 2, 2014 and has many very happy memories of his time at RBCS.

**Mr DW Trebble** (1971-1975) returned to School to see the Bodinetz-Pett retirement cricket match in July. Now retired from teaching at Merchant Taylors' School in Hertfordshire and living near Aylesbury, he presented us with a set of 1970s photographs recalling his years teaching Geography at RBCS.

**Nicola Watson** (née Sanders) is to be congratulated for the birth of daughter, Suzanna, who joins young brothers, James and George. Nicola and family live in Portsmouth. Her mother, Sylvia, widow of late Headmaster, **Allan Sanders**, still lives at home in Bath.

## Thanks

Many thanks to all those who have provided copy for this issue. Please keep sending your news to [david@designforprint.org](mailto:david@designforprint.org). As the Association's website is now closed, look for the latest news at [www.facebook.com/ReadingOldBlues](http://www.facebook.com/ReadingOldBlues).