

# Eagle News



Issue 120 September 2019 - January 2020  
The Magazine of the Old Bedford Modernians' Club



*Celebrating  
50 Years of  
Eagle News*

Inside:

Events Gallery 4

With Heartfelt Thanks 18

Memory Stir 27



## The Magazine of the Old Bedford Modernians' Club

Founded 1892

Issue 120  
September 2019 - January 2020

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Eagle News turns 50. See feature on pages 6-7.



## Note from the Editor

In March, this issue of *Eagle News* was ready for proofreading for the final time before printing and you would have received it just a couple of weeks later. Within days everything we had planned changed. No-one could have predicted that schools across the country would close, that students would be taught remotely and that teachers would need to rethink how to deliver the curriculum online while juggling childcare and other responsibilities concurrently. Staff here at BMS, where possible, were furloughed to help pay for the reduction in fees which we offered to our parents. Those who were not furloughed had to take on additional responsibilities and prioritise their workloads to respond to ever-shifting educational and operational demands.

Accordingly, my focus also had to shift. In times of crisis, good communication is crucial and I had to concentrate my efforts on that area of school business. The OBM Club team has been exceptional in keeping in touch with you all in different ways and adapted to this online world quickly and professionally. However, one of the casualties of all of this was *Eagle News*.

We had no choice but to put production on hold until we knew more. As the weeks went by it was necessary for us to remove any reference to forthcoming events as it was evident that they would not be taking place. This led to changes in design and adjustments to the general copy. The sands continued to shift and our priorities along with them.

Please accept, therefore, my sincere apologies for the delay in this issue reaching you and I ask for your understanding given these unprecedented times. Although the content covers the period September 2019 to the end of January 2020 I do hope that you still find it as interesting and informative as ever.

Julie Ridge  
Director of External Relations



## Contents

03	Letter from the Head	20	Sports Roundup
04	OBM Events Gallery	27	Memory Stir
06	Eagle News turns 50	37	Obituaries
08	School and OBM News	47	Directory of OBM Services
18	With Heartfelt Thanks		



# Letter from the Head

Alex Tate

I am delighted to begin this letter with the news that BMS remains the highest performing school in Bedfordshire, thanks to an outstanding set of A Level results, which surpassed my expectations, and the hard work of both staff and students.

An impressive 18% of the grades received were A\*, the highest for five years, 50% were A\*- A and 94% were graded A\*-C. It is all the more impressive given that top grades nationally went down, syllabi changed and unconditional offers this year increased. We celebrated again a week later as students enjoyed success at GCSE across a broad range of subjects with 98% of grades awarded between 9 to 4 or A\* to C. An exceptional 43% of grades awarded were 9, 8 or A\*, the highest number in the school's history. Furthermore, 18% of the grades hit the top mark of 9 and the average grade achieved was a 7(A). Notably, all these young people achieve academically as well as participating fully in sport, drama, music and other activities outside of the classroom. Their success is very well deserved indeed.

In January I presented Colours, for the first time in more than 20 years, to a cohort of students in Years 11, 12 and 13 for their individual achievement, commitment and leadership in co-curricular activities.

A Colours system was first introduced to BMS in Victorian times by Headmaster Dr Poole (1877-1900) who believed that boys should and must enjoy sport and it is not surprising therefore that Colours were only awarded to those who were deemed worthy of recognition in sport. This remained the case for most of the 20th Century with only a few tweaks made here and there.

The system itself evolved and became increasingly complex with a raft of awards such as badges, braid, ties, caps, cravats and blazers. A distinction was made between major sports (Rugby, Rowing and Cricket) and minor sports (everything else) and only those with Full Colours in major sports were entitled to wear, in addition to their braid, a large embossed eagle on their breast pocket.

Understandably there were complaints that students who excelled in other, non-sporting areas of BMS life should be entitled to receive Colours or some similar recognition. The then Headmaster, Mr Smith, eventually abolished the system in 1998.

The new Colours structure reflects the BMS of today and aims to create a simpler system where, to begin with, three significant co-curricular areas are recognised: Music, Performance Arts and Sport. Half Colours will be awarded to students in Years 10 and above, whilst Full Colours are reserved for sixth form students only.

As a historian I am delighted to see a BMS tradition re-instated and look forward to presenting Colours each term to those deserving students who devote so much of their time and commitment to making BMS the special place that it is.

During the run up to the general election last December there was some heated debate on education reforms, funding and the status of Independent Schools with a proposal from one political party to abolish them. It frustrates me that Independent Schools are all viewed as the same. According to political campaigners, Independent School parents are all awash with wealth. We know that this is not the case and we pride ourselves on being different. Our families work incredibly hard, making a number of sacrifices because they have chosen to provide their sons or daughters with the best possible education. More than 50% of our students are new to independent schooling and in September we welcomed the largest number of students to BMS in the school's history. That we have been entrusted with the education of so many girls and boys is truly a privilege.

With my very best wishes

Alex Tate  
Headmaster



## OBM Events Gallery

Thank you to everyone who visited the School on Saturday 14 December for a full day of OBM events

### Bruce Willey Memorial Match

In another competitive game, the 1st XV won 31-5 against last year's leavers. John Saunders (1943-51), grandfather of last year's Head Boy, Thomas Saunders (2008-19), presented the brand new Saunders Cup, donated by the family, to the winning team. The Bruce Willey Memorial Trophy was awarded to Year 13 student Rhys Evans. Dave Hurley (1972-82) refereed the game and Mark Denney (1984-93) handed out the first team's ties.



### OBM Girls' Exhibition Hockey Match

The weather was not kind to us during the hockey match between the girls' 1st XI and an OBM team. The OBMs won 3-1 with an excellent performance from all. The girls then had an opportunity to warm up in the newly refurbished King Room.



# OBM Christmas Lunch

We finished the day with the annual OBM Club Christmas Lunch. With more than 90 in attendance it was a lovely afternoon, with guests flying in from as far afield as Germany and New Zealand.





# Eagle News turns 50

School Archivist, Kate Doughty writes: 'The autumn term at BMS has been a busy one in the Archive, with lots of enquiries coming in and great advances made in cataloguing using our Archive software AtoM thanks to our dedicated volunteers. We also held a small exhibition at BMS at the end of November celebrating the 50th year of this very publication, *Eagle News*. It was great to see so many OBMs in school.

The OBM Club was founded in 1892 as a subscription-based service, and in 1992 there were 2500 members. The club is now run by the School and hosts dinners and events throughout the year. Membership is now offered for free to all BMS leavers and we now stay in touch directly with more than 6,000 OBMs every year.

*Eagle News* is designed specifically for OBMs and includes information about current and past students, forthcoming and recent events, and it is a platform for sharing memories of BMS in days gone by.

It was first published in January 1969 simply as the 'News sheet'; the familiar title would not appear until issue 42 in October 1982. It included event advertisements, one being a Wine and Cheese Party for members and their guests, held at the School on Friday 28 March 1996 as well as the advertisement of the famous OBM Club London Lunch. The rules of the Club and any new members, deceased and resignations were also included.

1989 marks the first colour cover and also the beginning of the 'Memory Stir' feature, which is still very popular today.



The exhibition in November was timed to coincide with the national *Explore Your Archive* campaign run by The National Archives each year. Our theme was 'BMS in the 1960s' to celebrate the 50th anniversary of *Eagle News* in January 1969. The OBMs who attended shared lots of wonderful stories about their time at the school, reminiscing about any run-ins they had with Headmaster J E Taylor before B Kemball-Cook took the helm in September 1965.

One of the highlights of the exhibition was the film from 1966-67 illustrating life at the school on its former site in Harpur Street. Boys could be seen cycling in to school, heading across to the tuck shop and enjoying a CCF field day amongst many other things. We had lots of positive comments, and, as one OBM recalls, the event 'brought back great memories'. Look out for similar events focusing on different themes throughout BMS's long and rich history in the coming months.

The *Explore Your Archive* campaign aims to encourage people into archives who may not previously have experienced them up close'.

## Edward Parsons (1955-62)

writes: 'The email was short and sweet. Come to BMS and see the Archive. Have a tour of the School. Chew the fat with old chums. Thrilled with anticipation? You bet. A super quick reply, followed by furious shoe cleaning and a Number 4 on the back and sides. Just in case JET' is looking down as I drive in the gate.

The car park is heaving. All that is left is a yellow-hatched area clearly marked No Parking. If you remember me, you'll know what happened next. (Gloss over that bit....Ed)

Reception is busy, my kind of place. A lot of bowing going on, like a Far-East trade convention. Putting on specs, I see they are looking at each other's name tags. I am quickly scanned by a man I do not recognise, neither by appearance or name. He knows me, though. Very well, it would seem: "Good Lord, Parsons. I'm amazed you are still alive."

I concur. Next is a visit to the Archive, I study the photographs and memorabilia spread over the tables, but I do get a sepia glimpse of three Masters looking far more authoritarian than they really were. Howell-Jones, Rawlings, O'Dickey. Odd that they should have all been oarsmen, considering their specialities in English, Music and History.

Doors open, and the corridors are flooded with children. Voices held low. No one runs. The walk to the Hall would have needed to be assisted by a sat-nav. Three turns and I am hopelessly lost.

This is where things turn esoteric. These are modern buildings. The latest facilities. Students busy themselves in the labs, garbed in white coats and safety glasses. Some of it still smells new, but not to me. All I can smell is pencil, like a jacket at the end of term. I am back under the Cloisters, crossing the Quad, walking through glazed doors to a panelled Hall, and on to the Memorial Hall, with its stone staircase to the Gallery worn convex by a million feet. Following the somersaults my brain is executing as the portraits covering the walls glower down on me. I have become a 12-year-old boy in my first year of Senior School, entombed in the depths of Blore's creation.



I walk up to the stained glass window. Read the inscription.....'They shall mount up with wings as eagles'....



Where the sun plays through the stained glass, a spectrum of colour splashes across the floor. Red and blue light hits my sleeve. Overwhelmed with thoughts unrecalled for over 60 years, I turn to face the camera. Chance to pass a hand over my eyes in a quick wipe. Forgive an old man his nostalgia. The shutter clicks. The spell is broken.

Walking back, I remember the fundraising for the window. As did so many, I recall my parents donating money at the end of a choral concert in the Hall, given to announce the project and raise funds. I gave as well, raiding my piggy-bank to make a meaningful contribution. Taking a last backward look, I wonder which bit is mine. I shake hands with the host at the door. "Sorry about the parking".

She smiles. "That's okay. You're a VIP".

And no, for those that wondered. I didn't get clamped.'



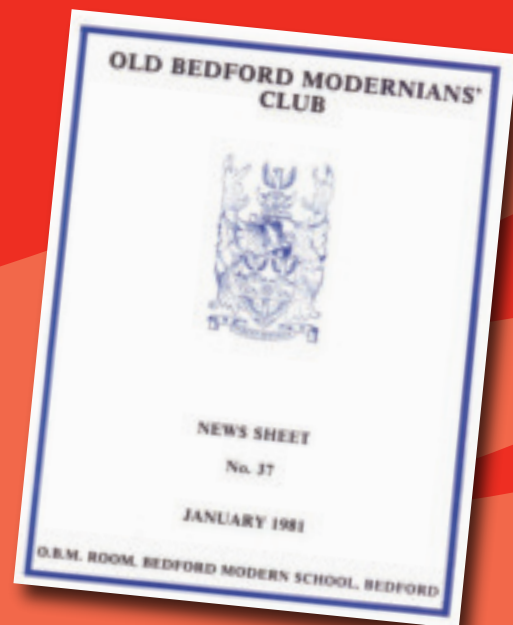
## Rob Baxter (1968-73)

writes: 'I recently visited the Archive and had a tour of the school with Kevin Appleton (1982-94), Paul Nicholson (1968-75), Philip Atkinson (1965-75) and Chris Roberts (1961-70).

Having left BMS two terms before the move from the town centre in 1974, and only ever visited the new site to watch the termly OBM Rugby, Football and Cricket and attend the OBM Christmas Lunch, it was good to look round the school and particularly the Archive which featured BMS 50 years ago, a period of time when I was at the school. There were school house ties and caps and copies of *The Eagle* and *Eagle News* from across the years as well as several staff and pupil group photographs. One item in particular caused some comment; a calendar card from the spring term, 1969, in pristine condition! Our recollection was that calendar cards became crumpled and torn in the bottom of jacket pockets by the end of the first week of term, so this was obviously an unused card!

It was good that our tour group had a mix of OBMs who had been to school at both sites, or only the old or new site. This led to us comparing school days between the JET and Kemball-Cook eras and also the school facilities, particularly the science laboratories and the art room. A very enjoyable afternoon!

PS. The Christmas Lunch is a relaxed, entertaining event and I would fully recommend that more OBMs attend in future years.'





## News

## The Bousfield Speaker Programme

**OBM** Professor Nick Groom (1974-84) visited the school in October as our guest speaker at The Bousfield Speaker Programme. In the lecture Nick discussed *Frankenstein* and *Dracula* and why they matter in the twenty-first century which was enjoyed by more than 60 visitors, including BMS students, parents and guests from local schools and colleges. Professor Groom also spent the afternoon with our Sixth Form English Literature students. He currently works in the English department at the University of Exeter and among his many books are *The Gothic: A Very Short Introduction* (2012) and an edition of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (2018).



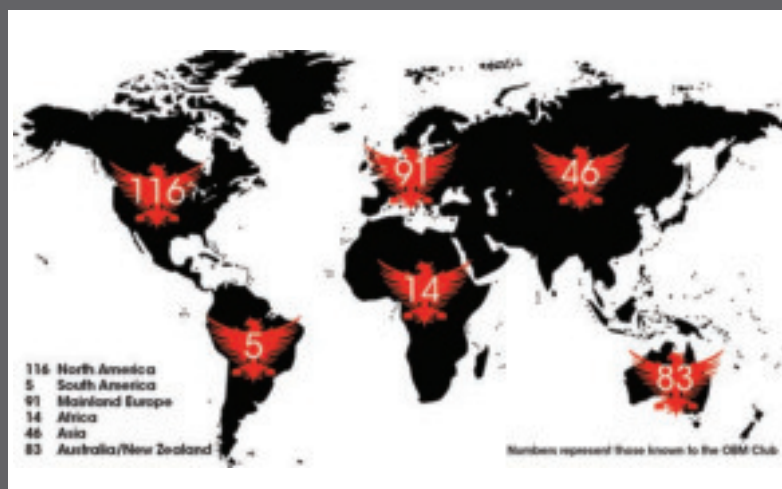
## David Ball Piano Scholarship

**Year 12** student Niall Townley is this year's recipient of the David Ball Piano Scholarship which is now in its second year. Niall is an exceptional pianist who fully meets all the criteria of the award, demonstrating commitment to his musical studies and contributing to the general musical life of the school. The annual award was established in memory of OBM David Ball (1937-45) by his partner Janet Clark to benefit and provide encouragement for promising BMS piano students. The award will cover the cost of Niall's piano lessons at school to the value of £1000 for the coming year.



## New OBM services

We are always looking for ways to extend the services we offer to OBMs and have recently launched two new initiatives: University Representatives and International Representatives.



We have recently identified OBM representatives at nine of our most popular destination universities; Reading, Imperial College London, Warwick, Sheffield, Nottingham, Nottingham Trent, Leeds, Loughborough and Birmingham who are on hand to offer advice to current sixth formers.

Similarly we have established OBM representatives in France, Spain, Switzerland, Austria, New Zealand, Australia, USA, South Africa, Malaysia and Japan. They are available as a point of contact for OBMs to help with travel advice, offer recommendations, make introductions or even organise OBM meet ups.

All contact details for the OBM Representatives can be found on our website, click on My BMS, OBMs and OBM Representatives.



## Academic Awards



As always the Academic Awards on Friday 20 September was a very special occasion in which we recognised academic achievement across all subjects.



We welcomed back OBM and former Head Boy Jay Lockwood (1993-2000) as our Guest of Honour, who presented the prizes to the deserving students.

Jay attended BMS from 1993 to 2002 and was Head Boy in 2001/02. He graduated from Nottingham University with a First Class degree with honours in 2005 and joined TeachFirst, a programme which aims to put high achieving graduates in some of the poorest schools across the UK.

In 2015 Jay successfully tendered for and opened a school, under the Government's Free School programme, which opened in September 2016. After overseeing a £7 million capital project and recruiting staff and students to the initial portacabins on the back of

a field, Logic Studio School is now an oversubscribed 14-19 provision with a successful Ofsted grading in 2019.

The school specialises in Computing and Business and aims to connect young people in an area of socio-economic deprivation with the 2020 economy and beyond, by working with a range of local and FTSE 100 companies to give students the work experience they need to succeed. Alongside studying traditional GCSEs and A Levels, Logic Studio School focuses on digital innovation, entrepreneurship and developing skills which employers are asking for; namely communication, problem solving and team work.

Congratulations to all the students who richly deserved their awards.

## Old Owenians celebrate 80th Anniversary

**Sunday** 01 September 2019 marked 80 years since Dame Alice Owen's School (DAOS) was evacuated during the Second World War from their home in North London to Bedford Modern School. The two Headmasters came to an agreement that the school day would be split, with BMS boys using the facilities in the mornings and DAOS

boys taking over from 1.30pm. The arrangement stood for six years and according to the Dame Alice Owen's School book: 'the Owenian net eventually spread over the whole town, North, South, East and West'. Pictured is the plaque thanking the School for its hospitality which was presented in 1989 to mark the 50th anniversary.



## King Room refurbishment

In 1982, thanks to the generosity of OBMs and other benefactors, work to renovate and expand the swimming pool complex was completed. Part of this project was the creation of a social area above the general changing rooms.

Named after the former master PJ King (1922-66), the room overlooked the swimming pool internally and the playing fields externally. It became the hub for functions linked with sport and particularly for hosting visiting teams.

During the summer break in 2019, the King Room had a makeover and is now a modern, comfortable and welcoming space for all members of the BMS community to enjoy as well as our many visitors.



## OBM Lodge Award



Andrew Young presented former Head Girl Padmi Fordham (2012-19) with the annual Old Bedford Modernians' Lodge Award for Personal Achievement at the Academic Awards evening in September.

We have recently created a new OBM pin badge, which is perfect for all OBMs to wear with pride at Club events.

Badges will be available to purchase at OBM events for a minimum donation of £3, or email us at [externalrelations@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:externalrelations@bedmod.co.uk) to get yours now. All proceeds will go to the BMS Foundation Fund.





## MBE for OBM John Chapman

John Chapman (1945-52) was appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire for services to the community of Marlow in this year's Queen's Honours list.

John is a prominent figure in Marlow having lived there since 1986. The Bucks Free Press commented that John has 'helped revolutionise Marlow' having served as President of many organisations including the Marlow Royal Legion, Marlow Age Concern and Marlow

Regatta, as well as serving as Vice President of Thame Region Rowing Council. Previously he has been a governor at Great Marlow School, has helped with Thames Valley Air Ambulance for nine years and has been volunteering with Marlow Rowing Club for more than 20 years.

John often supports BMS at Henley Royal Regatta and it is always a pleasure to see him.



## Artist Alex Chinneck (1992-2003) ties post boxes in knots across the UK

OBM Alex Chinneck has unveiled three identical new public artworks across the UK entitled: 'Alphabeti Spaghetti'. The sculptures which appeared overnight in London, Margate and Sheffield, resemble traditional red metal pillar post boxes which have been tied in knots.

The work continues his reputation for creating playful public artworks that transform the everyday into the extraordinary. In this new series of sculptures, which were all installed in one night, the artist turns these familiar, functional items into works of art.

Red pillar post boxes are a cultural icon in the UK and there are more than 115,500 across the country as a whole. A Royal Mail post box stands within half a mile of 98% of the population and their design and colour help create a quintessentially British landscape. No variation to their design is allowed, except in very exceptional circumstances.

Each of the three places chosen for the sculptures has a connection to the artist. Alex made his first public artwork in East London in 2012, installing 312 identically-smashed windows in a derelict warehouse. His second project was in Margate, in 2013, where he created a sliding house with curving bricks, windows and doors on a residential street. He is currently working in Sheffield, preparing to create a major new public art trail of sculptural red brick chimneys, inspired by the city's industrial heritage.

BMS Head of Art, James McGregor, said: "We are all very proud of Alex's achievements and it is great to see one of our former art students doing so well. In terms of Alex's normal work this latest piece is quite small scale, however I am sure it will resonate with the wider public."

Speaking to Bedford Independent, a local on-line newspaper, about his latest installation, Alex said: "I want as many people as possible to

be able to see and hopefully enjoy my work. I'm excited to unveil this series in three places simultaneously which have a personal connection for me. We're also looking forward to touring the knotted boxes to other locations across the UK."



## #GreatNightOut

In December the Junior School students put on a fabulous, colourful and entertaining performance of *Aladdin Trouble*. Every single student took part making it a truly inclusive experience.







The Theatre in Transit cast performed a three-night run of the thought-provoking play *Oh! What a Lovely War* at the Place Theatre in Bedford in November.



Also in November, students in Year 9 and 10 staged a brilliant interpretation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. There were some fantastic comedy performances which had the audience laughing out loud.

## News

# Parents' Association make Junior School Trim Trail possible

The BMS Junior School Student Council (JSSC) joined forces with the Parents' Association to realise their vision of a Trim Trail for the Junior School Playground. The project was completed over the autumn half term break following more than two years of fundraising and planning.

The JSSC suggested the Trim Trail in early 2017 after a period of research conducted by the students. The children pitched the idea

to Headmaster, Mr Tate and Head of the Junior School, Mrs Rex in which they emphasised the health and wellbeing benefits of the equipment.

Funding came partly from charitable fundraising initiatives in the Junior School and partly from the generosity of the Parents' Association. Since we installed the new equipment, students in the JSSC have created a rota for the Trim Trail's use and a list of rules to be followed.

Chair of the Parents' Association, Gordon Dickman, visited BMS in November and commented: "We were delighted that the students came up with this brilliant idea themselves and were more than happy to support it. We are always keen that money raised via the Parents' Association benefits as many BMS students as possible. Seeing the students using it today, I can see that it is already proving popular."



## House Dance

On Thursday 17 October there was another unforgettable night at BMS when students in the Senior School competed for the House Dance trophy. From the beautiful solos, to the small group dances to the inclusivity of the large group numbers it was such a wonderfully entertaining evening for all concerned. Judge James Harris, a graduate of Bird College and currently assistant director on the House of Jazz Artist Development Programme, had a tough decision to make. Rose were finally crowned the dancing kings and queens but as far as the audience was concerned they were all winners.





## Christmas Cheer



The annual BMS Christmas Concert never disappoints and the event on Wednesday 11 December was no exception. In the first half, the Big Band, Training Orchestra, Brass Ensemble and The Groove Collective delighted the audience with a versatile and varied programme including works from Handel to Gloria Estafan. Following the interval the School Orchestra and Sinfonia played pieces by Albinoni and Shostakovich, but the highlight was the School Choir's performance of 'Sing we now of Christmas', a carol composed by Year 13 student Greg May. Nigel Hess's 'A Christmas Overture' provided the perfect end to a very festive night.

## BMS Students on the West End stage

In December, Year 7 student Harvey Lookes appeared in *Nativity! The Musical* at the Hammersmith Apollo. He joined the all-star cast including Sharon Osbourne, Danny Dyer and Rylan Clark-Neal in this stage adaptation of the much-loved film.

Meanwhile, Imogen Law Hing Choy, Year 8, also appeared in a West End production, *Big The Musical* alongside Jay McGuiness, Kimberley Walsh, Matthew Kelly and Wendi Peters.



## News

# Laura's Medical Essay Wins Scholarship

On Thursday 23 January, Headmaster Alex Tate announced Year 12 student Laura Linley-Hill as the winner of this year's Robert Luff Medical Essay Scholarship.

The scholarship was established by the late OBM Robert Luff to support BMS students interested in Medicine as a career. Each year the Essay Competition is open to Year 12 students who are invited to submit an essay on a chosen topic.

Laura's essay, entitled 'What are the healthcare and wider societal implications of a possible legalisation of cannabis usage?' was chosen by OBM Dr Hari Shanmugaratnam. The scholarship offers a prize of £1,000 deducted from each of the two years of Sixth Form school fees.

Dr Shanmugaratnam commented: "This year's essays were all of a very high standard; however Laura's stood out as it provided a balanced view on a very complex subject and the scope of the issues explored was impressive."

Laura said: "I'm really pleased to have been awarded the scholarship. I hope to go on to study Medicine at Cambridge University and this will really support my application."



# Clean Sweep of Distinctions for BMS Performers

Bedford Modern School students have received a clean sweep of Distinction grades in this year's London College of Music (LCM) Musical Theatre exams. Year 13 student Jade Ajibola and Elizabeth Gale in Year 12 both received the DipLCM award, one of the highest performance awards on offer.

The other successful students were Alexandra Wishart and Lilly Brittain in Year 11, David Bygraves, Ginger Galey and Phoebe Templeman in Year 12, and Addie Whitelaw and Jodie Tyler in Year 13. Many of these talented students have taken leading roles in hugely popular BMS shows, including the recent production of *Oh! What a Lovely War* and *Sister Act* last year.

Diploma recipient and National Youth Theatre member, Jade, said: "I started taking the LCM Musical Theatre exams at Grade 5 when I was in Year 8. I have received distinctions for all my grades so far, so I am thrilled to have been awarded one for my diploma too. I'm hoping to go on to study English and Theatre at Birmingham University later this year, and then on to Drama School, so this qualification will really help."

Fellow diploma recipient, Lizzie, added: "I've been taking these exams for the past six years and, like Jade, I have received distinctions for them all. Although I'm hoping to go on to study midwifery at university, I will keep performing as I will always love Musical Theatre".

Liz Bottone, a visiting singing teacher at BMS taught both Jade and Lizzie and commented: "I am so proud of the commitment both girls have shown to their studies and of how hard they've worked on their technique to reach this level. I look forward to seeing what they go on to do in the future."





# Team Bionic Win Best Designed Robot

A group of students from Bedford Modern School have won the award for Best Designed Robot at the regional First Lego League tournament held at Cambridge University on Tuesday 14 January. The team were required to programme their robot to complete a series of missions in a race against time. They then presented their idea for green roofs in cities by designing a Lego-inspired roof tile.

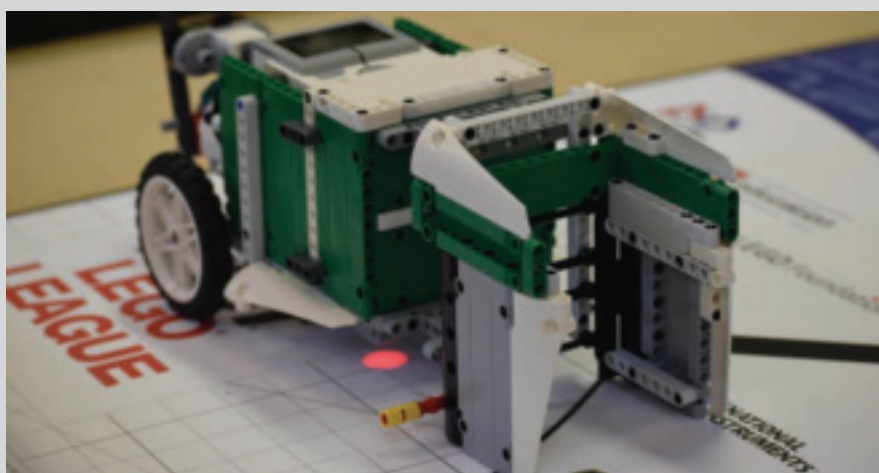
The First Lego League is open to students aged 9-16 and focuses on solving real-world problems. This year the competition title was 'City Shaper' and the aim was to show the students how cities and buildings grow, thrive, and change, allowing them to create new, innovative solutions to help shape an optimal future.

Discussing the day with Headmaster Mr Tate, one of the students said: "It was a great opportunity to learn new things and I really look forward to trying out my new skills at home. Now we've conquered the

regionals we hope to get a chance to go on to the nationals next year."

Year 7 student Elizabeth Scullion added: "This has been a really fun project. My role was mostly focussed on the research for the presentation but getting involved in all of the other areas was a great experience."

Supervising teacher, Catherine Benson, commented: "I am so proud of all the students involved. All the work in the build-up to the competition has been entirely led by students and the majority of the team were taking part for the first time. They should be very proud of their achievement."



# With *Heartfelt* Thanks

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We are so very grateful to everyone who pledges their support to the School and would like to express our thanks to those who made a donation last year to the BMS Bursary Fund after receiving their summer issue of *Eagle News*. Every gift we receive really does make a difference to students, both collectively and individually, both now and in the future.

If you would like to speak to someone about how you might wish to support BMS please contact Julie Ridge, Director of External Relations, at [jridge@bedmod.co.uk](mailto:jridge@bedmod.co.uk) or (01234) 332524.

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## Remembering BMS in Their Wills

Legacies from two OBM's will be put to good use in very different ways in the coming months in line with the individual wishes of the benefactors.

### **Richard Wildman (1956-65)**

was the OBM Club Secretary and School Archivist from 1997 until 2016. Richard died in 2018. He left a sum of money to fund a prize in his father's name, Sidney Victor Wildman, to be awarded to a sixth form student who intends to read chemistry or mechanical engineering at university. OBM Sidney Wildman (1932-39) MBE was himself a distinguished mechanical engineer.

Secondly, and thanks to the efforts of Richard's brother and OBM Stephen Wildman (1960-69), a fund also has been created to be used to benefit the School Archive. This is a most fitting tribute to Richard who was the dedicated guardian of BMS history for many years. The first project, which will begin this year, is to digitise all back copies of *The Eagle*. This will enable people to search for items and photographs easily and will increase efficiency as the Archivist will be able to respond to enquiries quickly and accurately. It shows the school's commitment to preserving its history while at the same time making it more accessible than ever before. Students will, for the first time, be able to search archive material with ease and, it is hoped, the archive collection will become a valuable resource for all. There is then enough money left to support more work in the future which we will identify as the need arises.





## Gerald Gilbert (1939-46)

died in 2015 and his obituary appears in this issue (page 38). His wife, Pamela, wrote to us to explain that she and Gerald had always intended to leave a legacy to BMS but that a change in her circumstances meant that this was no longer appropriate. She mentioned that Gerald was proud to attend BMS as a 'scholarship boy' in the 1940s and she has therefore made a generous donation to the Scholarship and Bursary Fund. She said:

"I hope that our donation can help current and future students experience the wonderful education and future opportunities that studying at Bedford Modern School gave Gerald."

We can only enrich the lives of our students as extensively as we do through the generosity and kindness of people like them.



## Club President donates choir books

For many years, OBM Club President, Robin Wills (1960-69) has made an annual donation to support music making at BMS. Some of that fund was used this year to purchase 70 copies of *Carols for Choirs 5* which were used at The Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at St Paul's Church in Bedford on 09 December. Containing fifty Christmas Carols, arranged and edited by Bob Chilcott and David Blackwell, they are a tremendous asset to the choir library and will be used for many years to come.



# Sport

## Football

Ollie Lee (2012-16) was joined by Joe Worboys (2009-16), Will Worboys (2007-13), Nick Pearson (2009-16), Oliver Delany (2009-16), Ben Thornton (2014-16) and Ethan Potts (2009-16) in the Cranfield University World Cup tournament last May.

Ollie writes: 'The 7-a-side Cranfield University World Cup includes players from all over the world who group together to form teams to compete for the replica, but very impressive, World Cup trophy over a three-month period. Participating under the country name of Gibraltar, we were sent the draw of the 16 teams and fixtures for the first round. Old Bedford Modernians made up the backbone of the team, joined by a few Cranfield boys, relatives of the Worboys and the odd ex-Rushmoor student.'

The first round ended with four straight wins and then three victories from team Gibraltar after the second round. The quarter final against Colombia was a tactical 2-0 win, and then a hard fought 4-2 victory against Italy set up a mouth-watering final against Iceland.

After finding ourselves 1-0 up at half time, a few mistakes later we unfortunately finished with a final score of 1-2 to Iceland. We didn't win this year but it gives us something to aim for in 2020 and a great opportunity to keep the group of OBMs together.'



## Stevenage FC Signs BMS Student

**Year 11** student and talented footballer Finlay Johnson has been offered a two-year scholarship deal with Stevenage FC which commences in June 2020. At the end of the programme he will have achieved an apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence.

Throughout the programme, the club will cover travel expenses as well as putting Finlay on a wage. He will train four times a week, with fixtures at the weekends, and will play in an U18 Youth League as well as the FA Youth Cup. Although just 16 years old he has already played two games for the U18s this season and has scored 12 goals in eight games for the club, making him the top goal scorer.

In order to pursue this opportunity, Finlay will move in with a local family after completing his GCSEs so he is closer to the ground and able to participate fully in the programme. Finlay commented: "I am looking forward to moving in to my new accommodation next summer and to the greater independence I will have. I am really excited about this deal as it provides a great opportunity to achieve my dream of playing professional football."





## Golf



**Congratulations** to the OBM team who competed in this year's Grafton Morrish Golf tournament. The Pile brothers, Ben (1987-94), Simon (1986-93) and Matthew (1986-93), Steve Goddard (1976-79), Colin Matthews (1976-80) and his son Johnny Matthews (2002-13) finished third at the qualifying venue with 87 points. The highest score they have recorded to date putting them in the final, which was held in Hunstanton in October. Ian Willis (1989-96) stepped in for Simon who was unable to travel to the final as his partner was about to give birth. Unfortunately, despite valiant efforts, they lost to Chigwell in the second round, 3-0.

Ben Pile wrote: 'In the plate on Saturday the team performed well finishing in the top half of the thirty teams playing in the Stableford event. I had my first ever hole in one on the 6th that day... only thirty-one years since taking up the game!'

Birkenhead were the overall winners of the main event, beating Malvern in the final on the Sunday.

## Cricket

**George** Darlow (2003-06) joined BMS as a Sports Coach in 2018 after studying Sports Coaching and Physical Education at Oxford Brookes University.

He is currently representing Bedfordshire 1st XI as well as playing for Sawston and Babraham Cricket Club, part of the East Anglian Premier League.

During the 2018 season he played for the Unicorns as a result of finishing as the highest wicket taker for Bedfordshire. This team of players, ranked at the top level of amateur cricket, had the opportunity to play against professional teams. They now operate under the same name as a representative side which is picked from 21 counties who play in the non-professional competitions and play prestigious fixtures vs the MCC annually. George has played in this fixture for the past two years and has been the only Bedfordshire player to be picked.

Currently George has 91 wickets and is therefore seventh in Bedfordshire for most wickets taken.



## Fast Bowler

**Year 9** student, Lottie Taylor, was accepted into the National Fast bowling Academy for the 2019-20 season. This comes after a very successful summer playing cricket for BMS, her club and county. She is now attending monthly coaching sessions with access to leading coaches and professionals.



# Sport

## Rugby

Former member of staff, Richard Chadwick (1971-2009) presented the 1st XV with their new rugby shirts in September.



## Rowing

**Year 12** student Ben Cox and OBM rowers David Rainbow (1977-84), David Gowing (1973-82), Richard White (1973-80) and BMS coach Joel Grant Jones competed in the squad which finished in second place overall at the World Rowing Masters Championships from 11 to 15 September.

The World Rowing Masters Championships is a five-day event held in different locations each year. This year's event took place in Hungary, 50km from Budapest, and attracted 740 clubs from 52 countries, including more than 80 from the UK. Masters rowers have to be a minimum of 27 years of age and race in rising age categories, although coxes can be any age.

The 28-strong squad included the top rowers from Bedford's Star Club and Bedford Rowing Club. Ben coxed a number of races during the competition and took home three gold medals. The OBMs managed to pick up an impressive six gold medals between them and the squad finished in second place overall, beaten only by a team from Moscow.

16-year-old Ben said: "I joined the Bedford Star squad a year ago and train several times a week. I have learnt a great deal from coxing these very experienced rowers, some of whom have previously achieved Olympic medals and won at Henley Royal Regatta. It's great that I can now bring their knowledge and insights back to BMS Boat Club. The competition in Budapest was very tough, making each win very special. Also, the windy weather at the lake added to the challenge of coxing."





## Netball

**Netball** player Rosie Fordham, Year 10, has recently been selected for the Saracens Mavericks U15 Long Squad for the 2019-20 season. This comes after being chosen for their Futures Academy for a second year in a row and passing her IO and C awards, qualifying her to umpire at local and junior league level.

The Saracens Mavericks is part of the Netball Superleague which consists of the top ten netball teams in Wales, Scotland and England. As part of the squad, Rosie will play against some of the top U15 netball players from across the country and be eligible for selection for the School Games in September 2020.

Other BMS students who are currently part of the Saracens Mavericks Futures Academy

include Year 11 student Juliana Orlenok and Jess Bradley in Year 13. Year 10 student Amy Wells is part of Wasps Netball Academy, a franchise competing at the same level in the Netball Superleague.

Head of Netball at BMS, Sam Brightman, commented: "Having worked as Rosie's coach for the last two years at BMS and at Saracens Mavericks I know she will be a brilliant addition to the franchise's netball pathway. She is hard working, adaptable and understands the sacrifice required to compete at the top level. Juliana, Jess and Amy have also done exceptionally well to gain places in the Futures Academies, and I'm so pleased all of these girls can bring their ever-growing knowledge and performance understanding from the franchises to BMS netball."



## Hockey

**Year 9** student, Sophia Warren, was selected for the U15 Girls England Hockey Performance Centre and started the programme in September, training at the Northwood centre on Monday evenings and Sundays. It could potentially lead to selection for the Futures Cup tournament where players are selected for the national squads.

Sophia attended trials at Merchant Taylors' School last summer and was selected from a pool of players from across the seven counties of the East Anglia region.

Sophia has been an active hockey player throughout her time at BMS, and also plays for Leighton Buzzard Hockey Club, for the last two years at Cambridge City Hockey Club and has represented Bedfordshire County for the last three seasons. She worked hard throughout the summer at various camps and during the stages of selection.

Sophia's parents said: "We are extremely proud of Sophia's achievement. We are very aware that the journey will, no doubt, have some bumps on the way but Sophia has worked extremely hard over the years and now has her rewards for that."

Head of Girls' Sport at BMS, Miss Woodgate, added: "It is very exciting to hear of Sophia's recent success in gaining a place at one of the prestigious England Hockey Performance Centres. She is a passionate and dedicated hockey

player who is fully deserving of this opportunity. Sophia always attends training with enthusiasm and a hunger to learn and develop. We look forward to supporting Sophia as she continues on her hockey journey."



## Sport

### Equestrian

Katie Garratt and Izzy Falle both qualified for the National Schools Equestrian Association National Championships in September. They both represented BMS in the show jumping and dressage sections respectively. The event was run by Cedars Upper School and held at Bury Farm near Leighton Buzzard.



### Table Tennis

Ben Dunkley, in Year 8, has been named as part of the England Hopes squad for the 2019-20 season by Table Tennis England. Selected as one of just 31 players from across the country, Ben will attend a combination of training days and residential camps over the coming year.

The England Hopes squad is the first level of the England Performance Pathway which aims to support young athletes with the capability to reach at least the top 20 in Europe by the time they are 18. This recognition came after a hugely successful season, which saw his U13 national ranking improve from 61 to 12, making him the most successful Bedford player in his age category for a long time.

His dedication to the sport involves more than ten hours playing per week, competing for the Revolution Table Tennis Club as well as BMS. Ben enjoyed great success in the Bedford League last season as part of the Revolution E team which won the Smith Cup and he recently won the U13 section at the St Neots tournament.

Ben recently attended his first residential camp with the England Hopes squad in Nottingham and enthused: "I really enjoyed the experience and came home as keen as ever to compete as much as possible. I'm really grateful for the support of BMS and my coach Mr Harper."





## Horseball

**Theo** Cassell (2004-15) had an enforced retirement from rugby due to a serious injury. As he desperately missed team sport he started playing Horseball at University. He thought he would try it as it combined rugby and riding, his two favorite sports. Horseball is a relatively new equestrian sport, first played in France 20 years ago, and introduced to Britain in 1991 at the Horse of the Year Show. Invented by French riding instructor and rugby player Jean-Paul Dupont, Horseball has been described as a cross between rugby and basketball on horseback.

Theo played in the University League and his team won the Beginners League in 2017. He then went on to represent Nottingham University at the British Horseball Association (BHA) Open Championships, where he came second in the Second Division. From there he decided that he should try using his own horse Mac, and after a lot of hard work and training – and against all odds, Mac took to it pretty well. They were invited to play in the

BHA National League for a local club, the Nottingham Knights, in the Second Division, and Theo was named 'Best New Player' by the Association.



He was subsequently invited to play in a Pro Elite Team, a team made up of GB international players. He has learned so much from playing with such an experienced team, particularly due to the significant step up in speed and ability of the horses themselves. It is a real challenge for Mac, who is a Cob cross, to try to keep up with ex-racehorses, but he always raises eyebrows and delivers above expectation. It was great for Theo to end the season winning the BHA Open Championships with him.



## Cross Country

**Cross** country runners from Bedford Modern School swept the board at both the Bedfordia Cross Country Race on 14 January and the District Cross Country event on 23 January.

More than 25 schools competed at the annual Bedfordia Cross Country Race held at

Lincroft School with BMS boys and girls from Years 3-8 represented in all six races. The girls finished in second place with a score of 583 and the boys took first place with 501 points. With a combined score of 1084 it was enough to ensure victory and they were crowned champions.

On the following week it was the turn of the U11 boys' and girls' teams at the District Cross Country event at Priory Park and they did not disappoint. In top form, they each won their respective events with the boys finishing with 69 points and the girls with 59. Both races had fields of more than 100 competitors, including the best runners from across the district which made the win all the more impressive.

Head of Junior School Sport, Tim Bucktin, commented: "These are both outstanding achievements for all the students involved and shows all the hard work they have put in, both in and out of school. In particular Zara Fletcher in Year 6 set the standard by coming in second place in the district event, and Year 5 student Milo Innes not only won his event, but was up against many runners in Year 6; simply outstanding!"



# Sport

## Fives

We welcome Philip Atkinson (1965-75) as our new OBM Fives Sporting Rep, who takes over from Chris Ryan (1979-83).

The Fives Club meets on Monday evenings, 7:30-9:30pm between September and May. All ages are welcome. BMS Maths teacher and master in charge of fives, Rob Kay joins the OBMs regularly, often accompanied by Senior School students. Former players and anyone who would like to try the game for the first time are more than welcome to join.

If anyone is interested or has any questions, please contact Phil: email@philip-atkinson.co.uk



From left to right: Ian Corby (1965-72), Mark Kiteley (1963-72), Year 13 students, Maddie Kent and Katie Sumner and Phil Atkinson (1965-75).

## Club Sporting Contacts

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# Memory *Stir*

## Congratulations to all the OBMs that graduated in summer 2019

**Emily Kidd** (2013-15) and **Ryan Narang** (2004-15) both graduated from Loughborough University with First Class Honours degrees in Industrial Design, and Product Design and Technology respectively.

They both visited BMS in September to speak to our current Year 12 and 13 Product Design students. Having recently graduated they shared their advice and guidance on creating portfolios, course and module choices, as well as highlighting the immense benefits that a year in industry had given them.

John White, Director of Sixth Form, said: "It was a great opportunity for our students to have such open discussions with both Ryan and Emily. We are very grateful that they were willing to come back to where it all began and share their experiences with the next generation of designers."



**Peter Fretwell** (2012-14) graduated with a First Class Honours degree in Philosophy from Birmingham University in July last year and is now at Hughes Hall, Cambridge, studying for a Masters in Theology and Philosophy of Religion.



Former Head Girl, **Izzy White** (2010-14) graduated with a First Class Honours degree in War Studies from King's College London.



**Rian Howe** (2008-15) and **Joseph Spencer** (2007-15) both graduated from Durham University with a Masters in Physics.



**Issy Powell** (2008-15) graduated from Oxford Brookes University with a Geography degree in the summer.

# Memory *Stir*

Harvey  
Pallett  
1952-58

reminisces about his time at BMS and writes:  
'I arrived in School House at the same time as the Smyth brothers and was equally shocked by the primitive facilities which we had to endure. Urinal (singular for 48 boys) outside and washing in the mornings at washstands with cold water (frozen in the winter). The dormitory windows had not been closed for probably fifty years. I was not so shocked by the food but I had been used to rationing all my life.

The cutlery was a mixed lot and some of the knives were not stainless steel and were stained and rusty. 'PJ' King who took over as House Master at the same time that we arrived, did get those changed fairly soon.

The summer of 1953 was, I recall, the last occasion of the Long Swim, from the Town Bridge to the Suspension Bridge. It was the time of the Polio scare and swimming in the river was not considered safe. We lined up in the Gym for Polio vaccinations. Boarders continued to

swim in the river at the Viaduct. We ice skated on the Boating Lake with home-made skates strapped onto Corps boots.

Where can one sledge now? The School has been built on Waterworks Hill, the best slope in the area, but mind the WWII pill boxes and the cattle trough at the bottom.

My own mark on the School's history is less than a small indentation. There was a small stir when I was shot one Sunday evening in the changing room at School House and I spent a few days in hospital. It was all very innocent really. A boy had sawn off a No3 bore (garden) shotgun and had been out on the Sunday afternoon and because the bell for prayers had run he put the loaded gun into my tuck box. Luckily the second former who saw it when I opened the box was pointing the gun down, towards my knees and not my head when he pulled the trigger.

I rowed in the First VIII while in the Fifth Form and sat several O-Level papers in the Town Hall in Henley during Regatta week. The results were far from good and my parents insisted that I ignore the Boat Club while I re-sat them the following year. I made good use of the time

and earned half colours for Athletics. I was less than popular with the Staff when, after half term in the summer, Robin Mocur, Head of School House and who had never been near a boat before, formed a Boards IV to compete in Bedford Regatta and I joined him. I was instructed not to display my First VIII colours and we finished last in the final by a canvas.

I left in 1958 with a final term's report that one would not wish to show to anyone. A few weeks after returning home, PJ King telephoned to say my O-Level results were far better than expected! Looking back, sixty years later, I would do it all again if I could.'





## James Mackay

1980-83

sent in this great photo of a group of OBMs and current students in the Allen Stand at Lords for the England v Australia Cricket on Saturday 17 August.

From left to right: James Mackay (1980-83), Daniel Mackay (Year 11), David Hyde (1962-69), Gavin Black (1978-88), Ian Bullerwell (1958-66), Alan Fordham (1973-83) and Andy Trott (1977-87).



## Thomas Lockley

1991-96

writes: 'I was at BMS between 1991 and 1996. My teachers will not remember me as the most diligent of students, but I generally enjoyed my time at the school. I remembered several members of staff as especially inspiring; Michael Muncaster (History), Tudor Arter (French and German) and Jane Ellis (German).

After several years of teaching French, German and Japanese in the UK, I settled in Tokyo with my family over a decade ago and am now an assistant professor at Nihon University College of Law specialising in how personal history, both real and imagined, affects language learning and attitudes to foreign cultures. My theory is that people who feel more historically connected to an 'international world' are more motivated foreign language learners. As such, my students learn Japanese history from an international angle, in English. It takes a bit of getting used to for some but they generally enjoy it.

As part of my work, I have recently published my first book outside of Japan, *'Yasuke: The True Story of the Legendary African Samurai'* (Little Brown (Sphere), 2019) – released as 'African Samurai' by Harper Collins (Hanover Square in the USA).

The book, written in an accessible style, tells the fantastic but true story of an African warrior Yasuke, who became a samurai in 16th century Japan. It has been well received around the world and got good coverage in outlets such as CNN, The Washington Post, the Japan Times, Mainichi Shinbun, The Jakarta Post, and the Houston Chronicle.

Strangely, what reminded me of BMS and inspired me to write in, was that I found out that an architect called Josiah Conder was also an OBM. He was responsible for scores of high profile building projects in Tokyo in the late 19th century, and the Japanese architects he taught were responsible for hundreds of others including Tokyo Station (which I commute through every day). Everyone in this huge city is intimately familiar with his work on a daily basis! A living history, even on the other side of the world is deeply connected to BMS. I hope this

consciousness will help current-day BMS students to feel more connected to other parts of the globe with which they do not necessarily feel much natural affiliation. Your history stretches over the oceans, do not feel it stops at Dover. Like Yasuke, do great things, traverse the globe and lead a meaningful life.

A movie, based on Yasuke's story, starring Black Panther star Chadwick Boseman was recently announced, though sadly, it is not directly connected to the book. Expect to hear more about this amazing man, Yasuke in the coming years.'



# Memory *Stir*

Daniella  
Lay  
2010-15

writes: 'Back in November 2018 I applied to be part of the volunteer Zambia project at my University (Northumbria). Volunteer Zambia is a project run by the Wallace group, which is a partnership between the Universities of Bath, Durham, Loughborough, Edinburgh, St Andrews, Cardiff Metropolitan, Stirling and Northumbria to support sports development for young people in Zambia. The universities have agreed to work together on approved sport development projects that will provide added value to the students of the partnership universities and to the communities in which they work, as well as providing an opportunity for integrated project development between the partner institutions. It is intended that the projects will cut across local, regional, national and international agendas.

Each summer the universities of the Wallace Group team up to send students and staff out to live in Zambia for a period of six weeks.



Working with Sport in Action (SIA), the student volunteers support the development of young people in Zambia through sports coaching, leadership development, construction projects, fundraising, charitable projects and drama and singing programmes.

I flew out to Zambia on 01 June 2019 and worked on the new projects that were the Kalingalinga and Mutendere netball hubs.

The hub sites' focus is to generate more consistency by taking netball to the girls' schools rather than the girls having to come to us. Week by week we saw an improvement in numbers and more girls wanting to get involved. It was an extremely daunting task being thrown out of my comfort zone and into a community and culture I didn't know, where I was told I needed to find a way to increase the participation numbers. Embracing Zambian culture was the key to being successful in my targets, experiencing everything from the local buses and cuisine to coaching 60 children on my own that have never played netball before and do not speak more than three words of English. Creating relationships with local people and earning their respect from your hard work and enthusiasm meant they would assist you with your sessions and teach you some Nyanja (the local language) that the kids loved you using.

Despite the challenges, the joy you saw in each child's face and how grateful they were for you to be there made every challenge seem minuscule. The experience was incredible, my confidence in coaching has grown massively and I encourage anybody who gets an opportunity like this to take it and embrace everything. It was a once-in-a-lifetime trip where I got to experience Zambia on a local, real level and I know this experience has taught me things that will stay with me forever.'





## James Brown

2009-14

cycled 950 miles from Land's End to John O'Groats starting on Saturday 24 August. He managed the venture in just nine days, raising an amazing £2,050, beating his original target of £500. James was cycling in aid of Kicking Off, a charity who aim to unite UK and global communities through sport.



## Sope Dirisu

2002-09

was cast as Biff Loman in the acclaimed Young Vic Theatre's production of *Death of a Salesman*, which was showing at Piccadilly Theatre, London, between 24 October and 04 January 2020.



## Simon Whitaker

2006-15

made his West End debut in the newly announced, *Phantom of the Opera* cast last year. The performing arts team said: "Simon was an integral part of the BMS Performance Arts Faculty during his years at the school, showcasing his abilities at every opportunity. Simon's success comes as no surprise to us."



# Memory *Stir*

## James Miller

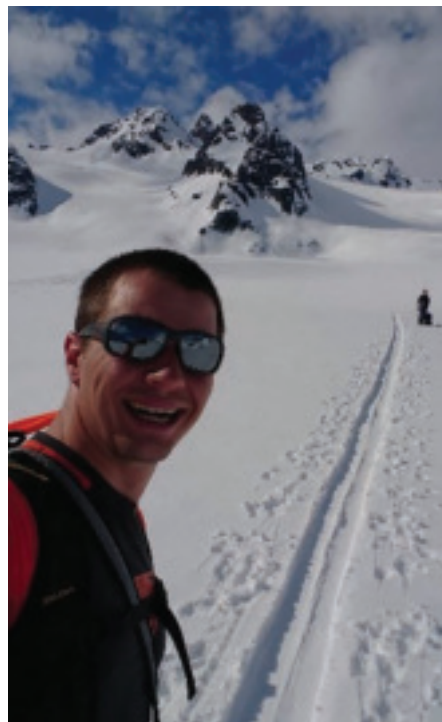
2005-10

writes: "After traveling back to Bedford this summer to attend a wedding where I met up with my old friends from BMS, it made me reminisce on some of my memories from the years I attended the school and in particular the outdoor activities that I undertook there. I vividly remember my trip to France in Year 9, and it is likely that was a large part of why I decided to choose my current career path as an outdoor instructor. Thinking back while out in France, I can clearly remember pondering how such an incredible career path would be achievable.

Not only have I managed to get a foot into the outdoor industry, I am now the Activities Manager for Active Outdoor Pursuits – a five-star outdoor activity provider located in the heart of the Cairngorm National Park. Here I have found

my lifelong passion and could not be more fortunate to be doing what I love in the best office imaginable (outside). A large part of my career is now not only teaching and instructing others, but actually training and assessing new instructors and helping others achieve what I have managed. I am now qualified in numerous different outdoor adventure sports and am fortunate that my job, while being based in Scotland, takes me all over the world. For example the photo alongside this was taken on the Strupbreen/Koppangbreen Glaciers in Northern Norway while on a ski touring trip in May 2019. My job encompasses school programmes, instructor training, adventure journeys and much more.

I could not be more thankful to BMS for always striving to improve their Sports programmes and get as many people outside on the fields. Also in their offering of different activities like the climbing on the wall in the sports hall and the DoFE programme, all of which will have helped me along my current career path."



## Robert Pipes

1964-72

visited the school in October and spent a happy hour with the School's Archivist, Kate Doughty being shown the archive. The main purpose of the visit was to hand over some items for the collection, including reel-to-reel tapes of two school concerts conducted by the late Fred Rawlins (1936-40). It is hoped that someone will be able to transfer them to CD so that they can be heard once again.

Robert enjoyed a career teaching music and religious studies, finally retiring from a lay chaplaincy post in Hampstead in 2011 in order to pursue more fully a late vocation as a member of an Anglican religious community. This brought him to Norfolk and to part-time work at the Anglican Shrine of Our Lady of Walsingham then subsequently at the Roman Catholic Basilica. He is now a Catholic Benedictine hermit but insists that he neither (a) lives in a cave nor (b) only eats nuts and berries. In fact the modern hermit is often somewhat 'free-range' and Robert regularly leaves the house to play the organ for services



and to engage in pastoral ministry; he also supports and encourages young vocations to the religious life and has oversight of monks and nuns attached to the Personal Ordinariate of Our Lady of Walsingham. Although he has come now to that autumnal stage of life

where the arrival of a bus pass on the doormat is eagerly anticipated, Brother Robert Augustine (as he is now known) keeps busy enough. He can be reached by old friends and the curious alike via [www.retreat-olb.co.uk](http://www.retreat-olb.co.uk) or by email to [rvpipes@hotmail.com](mailto:rvpipes@hotmail.com).



## Bruce Mackay

1969-75

writes: 'My BMS association started just a little over 50 years ago, in September 1969, arriving as an 11-plus boy from Harrold in North Beds. I had the great privilege of having Dan Dickey as my form master for my first two years in 1.19 and 2.19. It was during those two years that, through listening to Dan 'sing' the roll call every morning, I unintentionally learned the form register by heart. Somewhat remarkably, this



subliminal bit of learning has remained with me and I have been able to reel off the roll call on request ever since I moved on from 2.19. I say 'on request' but of course not many people have ever asked me to perform this unusual recital - either because they wouldn't be remotely interested, or because they have no idea that I have retained this essentially useless capability.

The names from the register are listed below. In reading this memory stir now, if you're sticking with it, you'll have to take my word that I haven't simply come up with the list after months of painstaking research. The truth is that I recited the list from memory (timed on my iPhone stopwatch at 17.43 seconds incidentally) and then typed it out for this article. Not everyone's idea of a party-piece but there you go!

The real purpose of my memory stir is not to show off a completely useless feat but to prompt contact from my old form mates listed below to see where and how you are, 50 years on. I'm ashamed to say that I'm only in touch with one, Clive Buckley (1966-76) and even that is not as regular as it was and I'd like it to be. Nick Cambridge (1966-75) and Denis Kinsella (1968-75) used to be good mates at BMS but sadly we lost touch when we left school, in my case in December 1975. Drop me an email to tell me your story and perhaps we can get some news circulating?

mackayba@gmail.com

## David Bedingfeld

1958-68

won the discus in 1968 and to this day is still the school record holder; 52 years later! David was an ardent sportsman at BMS, rugby 1st XV, rowing 1st VIII, athletics (discuss and shot put).



### Years 1.19 – 2.19 Register 1969/70

Barnes	Harris	Pullinger
Beaton	Holley	Reeves
Beresford	Hutchings	Robinson
Buckley	Keena	Ross
Cambridge	Kinsella	Sharpe
Chittendon	Leydon	Smalley
Cook	Lewis	Smerdon
Darnell	Mackay	Stone
Ecott	Maher	Turner
Fowler	Murphy	Whitmore
Guest	Newman	Zych
Hall	Powlson	

# Memory *Stir*

George  
Cassell  
2006-10

is studying International Business with Spanish at Nottingham Trent University. As part of this degree he has enjoyed living and working in Valencia for the past two years, while studying at the University of Valencia.

Here he has enjoyed playing for the *Club de Rugby San Roque* as well as for the Valencia University rugby team with whom he competed in the Spanish University 7s tournament. Having won the regional leg convincingly, Valencia University went on to the Spanish National University competition in Seville, and during a hard couple of days went on to win the tournament and become Spanish Universities' National champions!

He discovered playing alongside Spanish team mates a great way to immerse himself in Spanish culture and effective for quickly improving his language skills. George is currently back in Nottingham to complete the final year of his degree.



## Wedding *Congratulations*



Oliver  
Brunckhorst and  
2005-10 Natalie  
Taylor  
2005-10



It was lovely to hear that two BMS 2010 leavers got married on Saturday 19 October, 10 years after they met. They celebrated with many OBMs.

Pictured left to right: Hugh Ash (2004-10), Jane Hosegood (2003-10), Peter Hall (2003-10), Amy Flippant (2006-10), Phillip Taylor (1976-80), Robert Taylor (2003-08), Theo Rees-Bidder (2000-11), Oliver Brunckhorst (2005-10), Sarah Fallow (2005-10), Natalie Brunckhorst (2005-10), Felix Wilson (2005-10), James Kotze, Ellis Milligan (2005-10), Michael Hall (2000-10), Prateek Prasannan (2003-10), Ross Cunningham (1999-10).





**Anna Charters**      *and*      **Charlie Milburn**  
 2010-12                      2000-11

Congratulations to newlyweds Mr and Mrs Milburn, both OBM's who got married at Hestercombe Gardens in Taunton in August 2018. They were surrounded by family and friends many of whom were members of the BMS community. This included former and current members of staff David Shoukry (2002-11) and Ann Milburn, and OBM's Jenna Squire (2009-11), James Coleman (2001-11), Adam Perkins (2001-11), Tom Jackson (2002-11), Chris Griffiths (2002-11), Rachel Costello (2006-11), Andrew Draycott (2000-11), Ben Gardner (2004-11), Theo Rees-Bidder (2000-11), Adam Griffiths (2003-11), Matt Leydon (2000-11) and Kieron Banerji (2000-11).



**Ian Benson**  
 1979-83

Ian and Rachel Benson married on Saturday 24 November at Old Down Estate in Bristol. It was great to see a number of OBM's celebrating with them.

From top to bottom; Gareth Williams (1978-83), Tony Inchbald (1978-83), Tim Goodwin (1978-82), Stuart McIlroy (1976-81), Paul Nash (1973-80), Andy Lane (1975-81), Ian Benson (1979-83) and the bride, Rachel Benson.



# Memory *Stir*

## SPOTLIGHT on Dr Adam Hill (1993-98)



OBM Adam Hill has recently been featured in the media in both the *Times Magazine* and BBC Radio 4 as a result of his pioneering research into cancer prevention and incredible career spanning a variety of different industries.

Professor Adam Hill was a student at BMS between 1993 and 1998, is a dual-qualified clinician and mechanical engineer with a military background and has a career built at the interface of industry, academia and health systems. He graduated from Imperial College London as a Medical Doctor whilst also earning a PhD in Engineering, attending Imperial College Business School and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst. He received his postgraduate clinical training from the Royal College of Surgeons of England, and professional engineering qualification from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers.

While at BMS he played rugby and took up rowing and once he left, he also found time while studying to train with the British rowing eight who went to the Sydney Olympics. He chose to study at Imperial because he believed their boat crew was one of the best in the world.

Born in Swindon in 1980, Adam spent his early years in a two-up, two-down council terrace and then a number of military bases in the UK and Germany after his father re-joined the RAF as a psychiatric nurse, and his mother cared for service families as a civilian nurse. At the age of seven, he boarded at an idyllic rural prep school near Malvern and then at Bedford Modern which was a quite different experience altogether.

He served for seven years in the British Army and pioneered several new treatments for blast injuries. He also worked for McLaren - best known for its Formula One team and sports cars - for a while helping to develop devices such as a 'wearable exoskeleton' to propel those in a chair-bound state to stand up.

When he left the Army, as a captain, he and his team had developed a number of different interventions to tackle blast injuries, but none had ended up in the hands of people who could use them. He felt that he needed to understand how to commercialise such products which led him to take a business degree.

He is currently Chief Executive Officer of Oncimmune, a publically-listed immuno-diagnostic company employing about 50 people in Nottingham, London, Dortmund and Shanghai. Oncimmune's Early CDT Lung blood test detects the presence of antibodies known to be released in the body by the immune system as a response to cancerous cells. Enabling the earliest detection of cancer is key to timely initiation of treatment, potentially saving lives and significantly reducing healthcare costs. The company has just completed a trial, in conjunction with NHS Scotland, which strongly suggests that the test it has developed for early detection of lung cancer is a very useful tool for catching the disease before it becomes a killer.

Adam established The Hill Family Scholarship at BMS in 2011. The annual award of £1000 is awarded to Year 12 students who intend to take a degree in medicine or in the medical sciences. The criteria state that it should be used to fund medical outreach work in a developing country and candidates apply by writing an essay of between 500 and 1000 words. Past recipients of the scholarship have volunteered in Madagascar and Bangladesh and have been featured in previous issues of *Eagle News*.

Adam Hill has said: "The older I get, the more I realise that one of the few benefits of age is the ability to join the dots when looking backwards; as you sit with your lives in front of you, don't allow convention to mute your aspirations. Do good, make money and importantly, have fun."

To read more about Adam's incredible career search for his interview entitled '*Has this doctor revolutionised lung cancer detection?*' in *The Times*.



# Obituaries

## Alex Sheppard 1981-90

Died 02 July 2019.

Adam Marchant-Wincott (1987-89) writes: 'A mischievous, boundary-pushing, fun-loving guy with a huge heart, an infectious laugh and a winning smile, always looking out for his friends, from his earliest school days until the very last.

Alex joined Bedford Modern School as a boarder, at the age of nine, in 1981. He was ever present in both personality and stature being a talented sportsman and constant source of fun and energy and indeed it appears that some of his antics have gone down in school legend. His 18th birthday antics saw him gated for the remainder of the spring school term and his end of term shenanigans led to changes in school policy.

Due to a diving incident in his early teens he was not able to play rugby, which appeared to be his natural game and which he would take up again in later life, and so instead he turned his hand to rowing. His natural size, strength and stamina were perfectly suited to heaving on an oar and in his lower sixth he was in the number three seat of the victorious 1989 Henley Royal Regatta crew. His appointment to Captain of Boats in his upper sixth was one of his proudest moments.

Following a gap year working and living in Dubai with his parents, as well as Florida, he started at the University of Roehampton in 1991 where he studied social studies and sociology. His years at university are probably best summarised by one of his fellow first-year students: "The first time I met Alex I was overwhelmed as he was such a happy-go-lucky boy while we were all nervous first year students. He was notable for his red trousers. His infectious laugh and

smile were like a beam you could see for miles, always wanting to start the party and getting involved in making sure everyone had a good time... we all did the same course so spent a lot of time with him. Alex was a big man and being 5ft nothing always made me feel secure in an odd way. First to start a dinner party conversation and never nervous about talking to any one new, he would include everyone. We had a number of chats about the meaning of life - both having a slightly more unique upbringing than most... he was a 'carpe diem' man ... and certainly lived by that. Despite his jocular character he was also a complex and thoughtful individual."



After university, Alex worked around the world in media and marketing, in the health and fitness industry and in corporate account management, surviving on his wits, his confidence and sheer force of personality. He will be remembered by the lead guitarist of Iron Maiden, whom he inadvertently rugby tackled in the street in Bologna late one night.

Alex finally found his vocation in the luxury yacht industry, rising to Officer of the Watch on boats such as Roman Abramovich's Eclipse. He nonchalantly claimed to be able to skipper boats up to 110m in length.



This job suited him perfectly and took him around the world; his many friends have provided anecdotes from such places as Bahrain, Malta, Riyadh and Australia where he finally settled down for good when he married Melanie in Bali, and then settled in Melbourne.

Alex was the driving force behind the 1989 BMS Henley Regatta winning crew 30-year reunion and, still proud of his extraordinary physique, had decreed that the crew should have new all-in-one rowing kit.

Heartbreakingly, Alex never made the reunion race. As the reunited crew were changing after their row through on the Wednesday of Henley week, his wife sent them a message through to say that he had passed away. The wave of emotion that passed through this group of men that hadn't been together for 30 years was indescribable. He'd left his mark on them before they had even set eyes on him. His spirit was there! A short film from the day was released in Alex's memory and can be viewed on the BMS website.

Tributes poured in for a man much loved, a force majeure for the good, and an irrepressible spirit, fondly remembered by all.

Alex left behind a father, sister, wife and three daughters. Our thoughts and love go out to all of them.'

# Obituaries

## Gerald (Gerry) Philip Gilbert 1939-46

Died 23 January 2015.



Gerry's son, Philip Gilbert writes: 'Gerald was born in 1928 the son of an agricultural worker and brother to Elsie, Emily, Evelyn and Laurie. They lived in a small primitive cottage on a wooded estate in Bedfordshire. The house was condemned and demolished before the second war. When we visited its site a few years ago, Gerald pointed out the track he walked up on his way to school.

Sutton School was a small rural affair with all the children taught by one teacher in one room. Here, aged 11, Gerald won a scholarship to Bedford Modern School. However the cost of uniforms, books, and travel was beyond the means of a market gardener. Gerald's sister, Evelyn, volunteered to give up her own ambitions and worked in service to send the money home to pay for Gerald's education.

Gerald cycled from Sutton to Sandy and then caught the pre-Beeching train to Bedford and walked past the gaol where John Bunyan wrote *The Pilgrim's Progress*. At the Modern School he learnt English, Latin, French, German and Italian. Gerald was an accomplished sportsman and he won a cup at the White City for running the steeplechase in the Public Schools championship. He played centre at rugby. In a match against Oundle School, he made a break, dummied a pass, beat the fullback and touched down. "No try. Scrum Oundle" said the referee. On the bus back to Bedford, Gerald's housemaster told him that the home referee saw that the Bedford winger was in front of Gerald so if he had passed and not dummied, it would have been a forward pass!

Mathematics and science were Gerald's best subjects at school. He won a bursary to study Mechanical Engineering at Imperial College in London where he went after completing his national service. On graduation he took a position with Caltex in Bahrain. This started before the degree awards ceremony so Gerald never wore a mortarboard or gown.

He worked at the Awali refinery. It was there that his talent, not for engineering, but for furniture ownership paid dividends. And because he could lend a neighbour two chairs, he met a Data Operations supervisor called Pamela. He thought she was a bit of a stunner and she admired his dark wavy hair. They married and Judith was born in Bahrain before they returned to England where Philip joined the family. Gerald got a job with BOC and the family moved to Essex where Elizabeth was born in the winter of 1963 when the snows lasted until Easter. Gerald went to Mobil and the family moved to Walton where they lived in Bridge Street for almost fifty years.

Gerald worked on many international projects. France, Italy, the USA, Norway, Scotland and even Coryton in Essex! In France he became famous when a car belonging to "Monsieur Gerald Gilbert" rolled off a quay and landed on a small fishing boat. Luckily no harm was done.

One highpoint in his career was the construction of the Statfjord B platform in Norway. He celebrated his 50th birthday there with the Blotkake and friends wearing Norwegian national dress toasted him with Aquavit. Here Gerald added Norwegian to Arabic as his sixth language.

Gerald and Pamela lived in a beautiful house overlooking a fjord near Trolldhaugen where Edvard Grieg composed his most famous works. Strolling through a local park, Gerald nodded to a man walking his dog. Later Gerald realised that he recognised the man. His face was printed on Norwegian bank notes; it was King Olaf.

They returned to the UK and later Gerald worked as a consultant. Being home again gave Gerald the opportunity to become more involved in the Walton community. He was a Sidesman and a Lay Assistant at St. Mary's church. He also masterminded the annual fundraising fete for the League of Friends of Walton Hospital. He was the treasurer of the Walton Allotments Society and he ran a productive plot for many years. Clearly all his travelling hadn't taken him too far from his farming roots.

He was a founder member of ProBus and gained new friends through that. He also founded the Surrey Seniors, an organisation for 'more experienced' citizens to contribute to the community. The Seniors also helped some local politicians be 'less forgetful'. Gerald appeared before the Parliamentary Committees and took a case to the



Parliamentary Ombudsman. It is entirely possible that those politicians are, right now, celebrating Gerald's passing; even if not entirely for the right reasons.

In addition to local causes, Gerald supported a number of charities including Practical Action, Marie Curie, Save the Children and Medecin Sans Frontier. In spite of his own health problems, he felt passionate about MSF's fight against Ebola in Sierra Leone and gave generously to help them.

Gerald was very proud of the achievements of his children, his grandchildren, all his nephews and nieces, and the many people that he helped and mentored. And although he missed his own degree ceremony his grandchildren's graduations were unmissable and the photos of them in their robes were proud displayed.

A few years ago, Gerald and Pamela decided to move a short distance to Newlyn in Weybridge. Gerald's health deteriorated but he and Pam were determined to celebrate their diamond wedding anniversary. It was a fantastic day and they were absolutely delighted that so many celebrated with them.

A few months later, his illnesses began to overwhelm him, and he knew there was no cure. He accepted this uncomplainingly and in the certain knowledge that he would leave this life and enter into that house of 'one equal eternity', he gathered round him the people that he loved with a love that endures and never fails. Then he went to sleep and passed away peacefully.

To use a metaphor, this time he was tackled, stopped short, and when the referee blew the whistle for full-time, Gerald accepted it with good grace."

## Roderick Sear

1938-45

North House, died 20 May 2019.



John Chasey (1939-46) writes: 'Always known as 'Sammy' he volunteered for army service in February 1946 and was commissioned into the Royal Engineers in 1947. By chance, we both met up at Pre Octu, Mons Barracks, Aldershot and spent several weeks in the same platoon where we were put through our paces on various exercises, including some adventures during Battle Camp on Dartmoor.

After leaving the army he attended Imperial College, London, from 1948 to 1952 and met his future wife Marion. They married in 1954 and moved to Bracknell New Town, where he worked for Plessey, Philips and Racal Engineering. He and Marion moved to the USA in 1956, joining Westinghouse, Baltimore and left as Fellow Engineer.



MONITORS, 1946.

R. E. Peck. L. J. Whitten. A. R. Poul. J. King. A. Burnard. W. A. Parfield. J. C. Gates.  
G. F. Gilbert. G. M. Piggott. R. F. Muggleton. H. W. Liddle, Esq. L. C. Turnham. D. J. Boyles. C. W. Dares.  
(Head of School). (Headmaster).

# Obituaries

In 1966 he moved to MITRE Corporation, Massachusetts and in 1970 moved to Brussels, where he was attached to NATO to work on Over-The-Horizon Radar. He then returned to the USA in 1973 and returned from MITRE in August 1989, settling in Lexington MA.

My wife, Anne and I met up with Rod and Marion when they were in Brussels and we also managed a couple of quick meetings in the USA.

During his schooldays his technical knowledge was very much appreciated by the Dramatic Society for whom he worked wonders behind the scenes with primitive (if not positively dangerous) lighting and effects.

We had many happy times in those days of austerity and it was good that despite the distance apart we managed to keep in touch in the ensuing years. He met up with Leslie Collins (1947-47) who also moved to the USA and was running his own business.'

Leslie Pride Collins (1941-47) writes: 'Roderick, known to all his BMS friends as 'Sammy', died in Massachusetts. During his many years in the USA, my wife and I made several visits to Sammy and his delightful wife, Marion and their son David in their traditional white, wooden, neat and pretty New England home in historic Lexington, near to the location where the first shot was fired in The War of American Independence.

I wish to share a few memories of his youthful escapades. In these columns I have previously mentioned the 'Smears', which was an active social group of BMS boys and girls from Bedford Girls Modern School. The group eventually numbered twenty six, but its origin was simply the trio of James F Smith ('Miffy'), Roderick Sear ('Sammy') and John Chasey ('Chas'). These three youthful iconoclasts found excitement in some daring, but harmless, escapades during the later years of The World War.

The Smears trio became the stage electricians for the Dramatic Society and this gave them access to a locked area under the stage in the old school hall, where the lighting equipment was stored. They converted this into a den with soft seating and lighting, appliances for making coffee and toast and they papered the walls with 'pin-ups'. I can also recall some books there dealing discreetly with a subject of great interest to boys in puberty but not included in the BMS curriculum!

As the stage electricians, Smears operated a most hazardous and flammable assembly of lights, switches, boiling brine and overheated cabling. I have previously mentioned this in *Eagle News* and described the measures I took to improve things when I inherited the electrician's job after these three Smears' founders left school.

Despite the Smears' daring escapades in which Sammy participated, he had the intellectual ability to succeed academically, especially in science as well as rowing and rugby. I shall never forget his courageous tackle as full-back for North House, saving his side from certain defeat. Danger never fazed him.

Sammy's interests included a passion for flying and as a schoolboy during the war he submitted a number of plans to The Air Ministry, ideas for improving aircraft performance or combat ability. These were not ignored, but politely acknowledged. At home he built a full-scale flying machine but was saved from an early death when his father destroyed it before its first test-flight. This only increased his decades-long enthusiasm for piloting. But when his son was born he judged the responsibilities of fatherhood to be incompatible with zooming around England, the USA and Canada in fragile aircraft.

Among my old friends from BMS I admired Sammy for his intellect, humour, mettle, decency and dedication to his wife and son. My 90-year old memory is failing, but Sammy's character is something that I will always recall readily.'

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## Peter James Clifton

1933-38

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Died 19 July 2019.

Peter's son, Michael Clifton writes: 'Peter was born in Bedford to John Samuel and Rosa Marie Clifton at a time of austerity and rebuilding following World War 1. Although Peter was awarded a scholarship at Bedford School, he in fact joined his elder brother Jack (1927-33) at Bedford Modern School. A keen boy scout in his youth he adopted the Scout motto 'be prepared' which stood him in good stead all his life. With an eye on a university education, and a possibility of a career in journalism, events in Europe soon put an end to that!



In 1940, at the tender age of 18, Peter joined up to fight for his country in Bomber Command of the Royal Air Force. He learnt to fly on Tiger Moths and he was quite proud of the fact that he had his pilot's license before he even had a driving licence. Peter soon moved on to operational flying, initially flying Wellington bombers designed by the great Barnes Wallace, pioneer of the famous 'bouncing bomb'. Peter would later go on to fly the much bigger Halifax Bomber.



Bomber Command statistics from the Second World War are really quite horrendous. Statistically there was little prospect of surviving a tour of 30 operations and by 1943, only one in six expected to survive their first tour and one in forty would survive their second tour. Peter flew 63 missions so he was clearly an extraordinary survivor and obviously a very good pilot.

After the war Peter qualified as a commercial pilot but as there was a surplus of pilots he decided to re-join the Royal Air Force again in Bomber Command.

Towards the end of 1946, Peter married Joyce Berrington, both Bedford born and bred. A couple of years later their first-born son John was born, also in Bedford, and brother Michael arrived a couple of years after that in Egypt.

Returning from the Middle East, Peter was posted to RAF Scampton in Lincolnshire flying Canberras. It was here that the film *The Dambusters* was being made. Peter had a starring role flying one of the Lancaster Bombers which, for those who have seen this movie, will remember it included some pretty low flying antics.

Following a posting to RAF Waddington, with the introduction of the first of the RAF's new V Bomber force aircraft, the valiant Peter was posted to RAF Wittering. The Cold War was now under way and for Peter this involved a lot of night flying over Russia. Although Peter wasn't directly involved in the nuclear bomb testing where Valiants were deployed, Peter's aeroplane was certainly equipped with the goods! Years later when his wife Joyce found out exactly what type of bombs Peter carried and were stored a stone's throw from where the children played, she was absolutely horrified and said if she had known, she would have 'taken off' herself with the boys! Peter's final mission came in 1956 during what became known as the Suez Crisis, however the planes were recalled at the last moment. Peter's plane was not carrying a 'big one' on this occasion!

Peter also flew the Lancaster on one occasion as part of the Battle of Britain Memorial Flight which must have been quite a thrill.

From Wittering, Peter's penultimate posting was to fly a desk at Strategic Air Command in the United States where child number three, a sister to his two boys arrived. It was an eventful couple of years living in America at that time, the intensifying Cold War, the election of JF Kennedy as President, the beginning of the Gemini Space Program, race unrest, particularly in the Deep South, the Bay of Pigs or Cuban Missile crisis, and the beginning of the Vietnam War. Interesting times indeed.

Following one final posting back in the UK, Peter finally hung up his uniform and retired from a distinguished RAF career. He ventured into 'Civvy Street' where he worked as a Personnel Manager for the next 20 years or so. Perhaps not quite so exciting but regular hours and no more sleeping through the day! After finally retiring and following a few years living in Sydney to be nearer to his Australian family, Peter and Joyce returned to their roots settling in the village of Renhold where they have lived for more than 20 years.

Peter played rugby and cricket in his younger and not-so-young years and, as an armchair critic and supporter, always had plenty of advice, particularly for England teams. Peter lost many friends and colleagues at a very young age during the war and many friends, siblings and family since then, including his own first-born son. Peter's strength of character, resilience and dignity in handling and bearing such grief and sorrow are a mark of the man.

Peter was a gentleman, in the truest sense of the word. Polite, firm and fair. He was a man of the utmost integrity - truthful, honest with a strong sense of duty and justice but equally did not suffer fools gladly either. He had a sharp wit often delivered with a twinkle in his eye.

Peter is survived by his wife Joyce of nearly 73 years, two children, seven grandchildren and seven great grandchildren.'

## Frederick Barry Cooper

1949-55

County House, died 12 August 2019.



Barry's two daughters, Fiona Cooper-Smyth and Rachel Parnaby write: 'After winning a scholarship to Bedford Modern School where he completed his A Levels, Barry left to pursue an apprenticeship with de Havilland Aircraft Company where he studied aircraft design before qualifying as a Chartered Engineer.

Barry joined the Royal Air Force as an Engineer Officer in 1962, initially working on Javelin and Meteor aircraft. He married the love of his life, Margaret, before moving to Cyprus with the Squadron for three years – including a three-month posting to Zambia. Upon return to the UK, Barry completed the Junior Command and Staff course before being posted to RAF Cranwell to do the Advanced Weapons course after which he became qualified in aero-systems and did three years at Boscombe Down Experimental Establishment measuring aircraft weapons system performance.

# Obituaries

He was promoted to Senior Engineer, working on Lightning aircraft in Scotland, Cyprus and Saudi Arabia where he monitored British Aerospace maintenance on Lightning and Strike master pilot training aircraft.

During his tour in Saudi Arabia, Barry, who had by now been promoted to Wing Commander, flew in Concorde to the UK with his family, bought a new car and drove it across Europe and part of the Middle East to Riyadh, Saudi Arabia on an adventure that saw him being held up at gun point (twice) as he crossed borders in Syria and Jordan, and dealing with bureaucracy regarding visas, which meant he had to return to Cyprus via ferry to sort it out. The following year, he drove back to the UK from Saudi, again with his family, but on a different route via Egypt and Italy. Two unforgettable road trips he recounts in his own personal book *The Ramblings of an RAF Engineer*.

During a further posting to Oman for two years, Barry oversaw contractor maintenance of Jaguar and Hunter aircraft as well as Rapier missiles and long-range ground radar facilities. This was another exciting tour where he was a guest of the Sultan of Oman and was even invited to the palace in Muscat, along with fellow colleagues.

Following a final stint at RAF HQ Strike Command and MOD, Barry retired from the RAF before commencing civilian service as RAF Halton's Health and Safety Officer before then being promoted to an Auditor, working to improve the well-being of others and the environment.

During his time with the RAF, Barry had two significant claims to fame: one was that he wrote the RAF Strike Command Manual of Health and Safety adopted by the RAF across all their operations in the UK and internationally. Secondly, he was instrumental in installing the Hunter aeroplane that stands tall outside RAF Halton's Station Headquarters. This impressive 'Gate guardian' still remains there today as a visual reminder of a career to be proud of.

Barry was a keen gardener, tennis player, bridge player and church organist. In Cyprus, he developed a passion for lapidary – collecting pebbles on the beach, cutting and polishing them to turn into beautiful pieces of jewellery. Despite only immigrating to Perth, Western Australia in 2016, Barry quickly became established as the organist for Whitford's Anglican Community Church and All Saints Church, Dianella. His music will be missed by many and fondly remembered.'

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## Arthur H Fitt 1944-49

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East House, died 04 November 2019.

Arthur's brother, Russell Fitt (1940-45) writes: 'I am saddened to report the death of my brother Arthur who attended our school in the second half of the 1940s. Arthur was born in Droxford a beautiful village in the Meon Valley, in Hampshire.



Unfortunately the beauty of the area did not compensate for the lack of educational facilities. There was a scholarship exam each year, what we would now call the eleven plus and if one passed it then one could go to Portsmouth Grammar school, some sixteen country miles away. Whether anyone entered it, or did not enter it, because of travel problems, is not clear. What is a matter of fact is that in the history of the local school, no one ever passed it.

Our parents in 1939 decided to move to Bedford in the hope of taking advantage of the education opportunities available at the two large public schools partly funded by the Harpur Trust. Arthur took advantage of this by taking a scholarship from Goldington Road School to Bedford Modern School in 1944. He was no mean scholar but decided to leave at sixteen armed with a decent Cambridge schools certificate with matric exemption. One recalls that university entrance was, in those far off days, an exception rather than the rule.

Arthur went to work for a building company by the name of Lindum Lincoln who, whilst in his words, paid him a pittance, also gave him the opportunity to study for and qualify as a Civil Engineer. He qualified and worked in and around the UK for some years.

In the meantime, in April 1966 Arthur married his childhood sweetheart, Pauline Mears, a member of the well-known and well-respected local Mears family. She was a former student of the Convent School. It was in the early sixties that his life took a turn. Arthur was offered a job in Africa, initially in Ghana where he lived and worked for seven years. He went to Zambia before moving on to Cape Town, South Africa, in 1970, where he set up his own successful Civil Engineering company.

Some years later, on retirement, he moved to the attractive town of Knysna on the coast between Cape Town and Port Elizabeth, where he and Pauline lived for 23 years. More recently they moved back to Cape Town where Pauline and their daughter live today.



His son Trevor moved back to England many years ago and he and his wife Bettina currently live in Ampthill.

Arthur passed away in Cape Town on 04 November 2019 at the age of 85.'

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## Douglas Keith Jolly

1936-42

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East House, died 26th July 2019.

His son Russell Jolly (1965-73) writes using his father's own notes: 'Dad was born in Bedford and lived in Goldington Road. He took part in most school activities at House level including boxing! He often talked about the enforced river swim from the Town Bridge to the Boat House.



He left school to embark on a five-year apprenticeship at Igranic Electrical. After four years he was called up and spent nearly three years in Germany with the Occupation Army. He later returned to Igranic where he met his wife-to-be Peg and they married in 1950. They had two sons, Russell and Michael (1969-77), both OBM's.

In 1954 Dad moved to Tobler Suchard in Miller Road and stayed with the company as Departmental Manager until he retired in 1989. Chocolate was Dad's passion and not an event went by without the talk of Easter eggs, liquors and most of all Toblerone.

Dad served on the Parents' Association and assisted in the organisation of the last Parent Association dinner dance in the old school hall, just before the big move.

Dad had a long and very happy retirement taking mum on many holidays and enjoying his grandchildren. Dad spent a great deal of his time partaking in the lodges' activities which he thoroughly enjoyed and he was also a volunteer driver for Macmillan. He will be remembered as a very proud and hardworking man, devoted to his family and above all a perfect gentleman.'

Gordon Staple (1954-61) writes: 'Doug Jolly was initiated into the Old Bedford Modernians' Lodge in April 1974 at the age of 48. He went on to become Master of the Lodge in 1983, following which he was appointed Lodge Secretary, an office he held for some seven years. Doug had two sons who both attended BMS and he was very supportive of the school throughout his life. This close relationship extended to the school lodge, also attended by a number of his contemporaries. In his capacity as lodge secretary, Doug put his qualities of dedication, efficiency and a strong personality to great effect and the lodge prospered. Of the 55 lodges in Bedfordshire at the time he was highly regarded as being amongst the most efficient secretaries, gaining the lodge an enviable reputation locally. His work both for the lodge and generally for Freemasonry was subsequently recognised with a senior appointment in the Provincial Grand Lodge of Bedfordshire. Such was his enthusiasm for the school he asked that the school song be included in his Order of Service at his funeral, attended by a strong representation from the school lodge. His equal enthusiasm for Freemasonry was demonstrated by his request that the Masonic Closing Hymn, sung at the

conclusion of lodge meetings also be included in the Order of Service. A well-respected person, he will be long remembered in the annals of the school lodge.'

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## Hilary Ryan

1986-95

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Former Staff, died 20 September 2019.

Former staff and friend of Hilary's, Valerie Simmonds (1984-97) writes: 'Hilary was born and brought up in Norwich, moving on to Nottingham University where she graduated with a degree in Biology and obtained her teaching qualification. Her first teaching post was back in Norfolk at Wymondham College, where she was also a house tutor. Whilst there she met John and became engaged.

John had already moved to BMS in December 1980, and they got married in July that year. Hilary took up a teaching post at Daubeney Middle School in September. In 1986 Hilary joined the staff at BMS teaching science in the Middle School. In the early 1990s she was appointed as Deputy Head in the Junior School. During these years Hilary and John were researching the best way to adopt children. Emily and Anna were adopted in 1995 and 1997. Hilary resigned from BMS in 1995 to devote her time to Emily. The love and fulfilment which they felt was wonderful to

# Obituaries

witness. Those were, indeed, halcyon days. Hilary was approached by St Andrew's School to take a one-year contract from September 1995. As this was very part-time and near to home, she decided to do this. Her commitment to both family and school was amazing and she increased her teaching hours from March 1998. Her world could so easily have fallen apart when, in September, 2000 John suffered a major stroke at the age of 48. The days immediately following were uncertain as the prognosis was not good. She tackled the situation with enormous stoicism determined that the girls' lives continued as normally as possible. Miraculously John recovered and was able to return to teaching after Easter in 2001.

Promotion at St Andrew's to Head of Senior School in 2002 followed and she was subsequently appointed Head in 2013. During this period she was a wonderful mother and an amazing tower of strength to the pupils and staff at school, approaching all decisions that had to be made with extreme wisdom, sensitivity and calm. In August 2017 she decided to join John in retirement, to enjoy some quality time together with the girls both settled in their careers.

One day into retirement John died in the night. Once again Hilary's selfless nature was inspirational. With determination, her first priority was to support and look after Emily and Anna during those sad weeks. She was looking to the future with plans of things she would do and which places we would like to visit on holiday together. The agonising blow with the discovery of breast cancer in June that year would have 'finished' most people - but not Hilary. She approached the chemotherapy treatment with unstinting courage. Sadly her cancer-free months, following chemotherapy, were few, but still she talked about the future with enthusiasm. In July, with spread to the brain, Hilary underwent 10 days of radiotherapy. She had one last holiday in Northern Cyprus - reliving the many trips she had experienced with John and the girls in earlier years. It seemed so unjust and unbelievable that, just six weeks

later, Hilary's life was over when her organs shut down with the spread of her cancer.

She will be missed for many years to come by family, friends and colleagues but all will have wonderful memories of time spent with Hilary and those cannot be taken away. The packed crematorium was a testament to the amazing person she was and just how many lives she had touched during her all-too-short life.'

## John Ansley 1942-48

South House, died 11 November 2019.

John's nephew, Richard Ansley (1965-66) writes: 'John Ansley died peacefully in his sleep. He had been ill off and on since the beginning of the year, including periods in hospital.

His wife, Susan, pre-deceased him in 2003. He is survived by their four children – Douglas, Margaret, Nicholas and Fiona.

His funeral was held at St Gabriel's Roman Catholic Church, Billingshurst followed by cremation at Worthing. His ashes will be interred in the garden of remembrance alongside his wife at St Gabriel's Church. He followed his brothers, Bob and Bill, joining the RAF in 1948 at RAF Halton. Later he trained to be a pilot and spent most of his RAF career in transport command. He was commissioned and reached the rank of Flight Lieutenant.



He married his wife, Susan Hume-Wright, in 1959 at Aldershot. They had four children. They bought a house in Wisborough Green, West Sussex which became the family home.

After he left the RAF he carried on his flying career with British Caledonian. When he retired, he and his wife Susan stayed in the family home at Wisborough Green. Now all three brothers, Bob, Bill and John and their wives, Janet, Barbara and Susan are together again. They all enjoyed partying, so no doubt they are all now giving St Peter a hard time!





## Geoffrey Sturgess

1937-40

North House, died 20 December 2019.

Geoffrey's stepson, Mark Bromley writes: 'Geoffrey George Henry Sturgess was born in Preston Lancashire on 21 November 1923, the only son of Lillie Fell and George Sturgess.

Injured in the First World War, Geoffrey's father suffered with his health but nevertheless worked his way up in local government and, appointed as Superintendent of Works for the Council in Biggleswade, the family moved there from Preston.

Sadly, his father passed away in 1937 when Geoffrey was only thirteen so he and his mother relocated to Bedford where he attended Bedford Modern School. He enjoyed the sporting activities at school, particularly water polo (as goalkeeper), rugby and fives (a sport he modestly admitted being rather good at).

In the early years of the Second World War he was a town firewatcher, a duty he carried out from the Bedford Modern School tower in Harpur Street. He also remembers cutting down trees with a Master in the school grounds to be used as firewood which was in short supply.

On leaving school Geoffrey had a short spell as a police cadet, although felt he was more suited to insurance and joined the Phoenix Insurance Company in Bedford.

Eventually he was called up and served in the RAF in the Middle East and Italy for several years. He had many humorous stories to tell of his war service – not least when he was tracking Winston's Churchill's plane on radar over the Mediterranean and had to tell his Commanding Officer he had 'lost' the Prime Minister. Fortunately for us all, Churchill landed safely and Geoffrey didn't have to face the ignominy of mislaying our great wartime leader.

After the war, Geoff resumed his career at the Phoenix Insurance Company, a career of over forty years which culminated at the London head office. Again, he had many humorous tales to tell – one involving an elephant (amongst other things he insured circuses) that had sat on a Morris Minor. He also served in the Royal Observer Corps based in Biddenham involved in the detection, identification, and reporting of aircraft and other threats over Great Britain throughout the Cold War.

At the age of 60 Geoffrey met Margaret Bromley, a widow and a lady that he had known and admired since they had played badminton in their youth. Geoffrey and Margaret became a couple and married in 1986. Life was good, involving history lectures,

many holidays, outings and family get-togethers.

Geoffrey and Margaret enjoyed thirty very happy years together until Margaret passed away in 2016. Geoffrey soldiered on at home, independent and enjoying his garden and sport on the television, particularly the rugby. His final year was spent at Airedale Nursing Home where he entertained the staff with his stories about Bedford Modern School, the war and his career in insurance. He celebrated his 96th birthday in November with cards and gifts, his room decorated with banners and balloons.

Throughout his life Geoffrey always retained a keen interest in Bedford Modern School and was an avid reader of *Eagle News*.



# Obituaries

## George Goodwin 1960-69

Died 01 November 2019.

George's sister, Rev'd Ann Bossingham writes: 'George Alan Goodwin was born in Ampthill in 1950, one of two children born to Ralph and Mary Goodwin, and named in honour of both his grandfathers and his maternal great-grandfather. Ralph, himself an Old Bedford Modernian, was keen for George to have the chance to go to Bedford Modern School. Both parents were delighted when their son passed the entrance exam and took his place in the Junior School, where one of his first teachers was 'Pop' Hussey. Mr Hussey had some fingers missing, and had the wisdom to show his hand to the class at the very beginning, so that the boys should not be frightened. This compassionate act made a great impression on George, and he never forgot it. Like all beginners at BMS at that time, he wore a cap with a white button stitched to the top. This signified that the wearer had not yet swum his 'pass'.

George's parents, in order to spur him on, promised that when George had accomplished this achievement, they would buy him an expensive airfix kit on which he had set his heart. He came home the next day having swum the necessary distance. In this way he demonstrated the focus and determination which were very much a part of him.

Never very sporty by inclination, he opted to row in preference to football or rugby, and eventually stroked for the second eight. He enjoyed drama and took part in a number of school productions, including *Androcles and the Lion*, and a revue entitled 'Q.E.D.' Always an academic high flier, he was put into the fast stream and later took some of his higher exams a year early. Nevertheless one of his favourite activities was playing bridge in the monitors' room.

Following A Levels, he went to Southampton University where he studied Law, and also

met his future wife Tricia, a biochemist. After their marriage in 1973, they made their home in Guildford, then in Burgess Hill, before moving to Ewell where they were to settle for the remainder of their married life. After articles and a brief period with a law firm, he moved on to teaching. In this work, at branches of the College of Law at Guildford and at Lancaster Gate, he found great fulfilment. He was a gifted communicator and a genial colleague. Always with a ready sense of the ridiculous, he thoroughly enjoyed the occasional opportunity for drama provided through his work at Legal Network Television.

In his spare time, and after retirement, he threw himself into work with the Bluebell Railway, Riding for the Disabled, the Woodland Trust and the Ramblers. These three latter interests he shared with Tricia. Together, they worked in the garden and on the allotment, growing most of their own food. And of course, right to the end of his life George delighted in his beloved cats.

He died, far too soon, in his 68th year, much missed by his wife, his family and his many friends.'





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