

Alfredians



A newsletter for King Alfred School Alumni

Autumn 2009

Memories of KAS at Royston

My brother Simon, my mother and I, spent the years 1942 to 1945 - possibly 1946 - in Royston; KAS had been evacuated there when the war began. In our conversations after we moved back to London we always referred to it as 'Royston' though in fact we were outside the town and at Flint Hall Farm. Our mother was a teacher at the school, and was known as Rosalind (Ros) Ryder-Smith and later, when she re-married, as Ros Johnson. I have a memory of her telling me that Miss Hibburd (Hibby) and Miss Hyatt (who never had a nick name as far as I can remember) had said to the school council in the late 1930s that they believed there would be a war before too long. They thought that if that happened, the school would need to move out of London for the duration of the fighting and they had found a farm which the school could buy in readiness. But the council declined to spend what must have been a large sum of money. So the Misses Hibburd and Hyatt bought it themselves. When the war came they offered it to KAS and the council gratefully accepted. The school was duly moved to Royston and away from the bombing.

The farm continued to be a working farm as well as housing the school. It was farmed by Anthony (known as Ant) and Jenny Horton and they had, I think two children, a boy and a girl. I remember the luxury of having a bath in their old farm house. Ros taught in the nursery school



along with at least one other teacher, maybe Mary Gillet, and also taught French to older pupils.

Flint Hall Farm had two large old wooden barns, known as Big Barn and Little Barn. Big barn was truly huge and in the holidays Simon and I were allowed to play among hay bales there, and Little Barn was very big too and call over was held there as well as sing-song and other whole school activities. Other farm buildings were used by the school; my mother played string quartets with other teachers in a converted pig sty.

There were temporary wooden buildings put up in fields for class rooms and I know there was at least one air raid shelter, for, though outside London, we were not immune from the bombing.

I was in the nursery school (I was aged two when we arrived) and I remember a regular routine when the teacher would say to us "Under your desks!" and we would all dive down as we were told. I learnt later this was because the air raid shelters couldn't hold all the school, and we were thought likely to get some protection from flying broken glass if we were under our desks. Luckily this was never tested, as we were not bombed. I do remember collecting silver foil strips from the fields in the mornings; these were apparently dropped by German planes to confuse the British radar.

Simon is 4 years older than me, and a story I must have heard after the war ended, was that the older children and teachers were in one of the barns when a flying bomb was heard overhead. Its engine cut out. Everyone dived for cover... except Simon, who remembered that the bomb would still glide some distance till it landed and exploded.

As a family we lived in an old wooden



Simon, Rosalind (Ros) and Jocelyn Ryder-Smith outside the Sampan

caravan called the Sampan. It had been a horse drawn pantechinon and had been simply converted to allow people to live in it. It was small, there were bunks, a coke stove, no electricity of course, and our mother had to get water in a bucket from a stand pipe some distance away. In the Sampan there was a narrow passage leading to a cupboard near the stove; an adult arm could reach into the cupboard, but I once found out that as a 2 or 3 year old girl I could get my whole body into it, out of reach of my mother. She stood looking down the small passage and telling, asking, cajoling me to come out, while I stayed there thinking that this was great fun, till finally I emerged.

I remember black-out material and the need not to show any lights at night; but there came an evening when the whole school went in procession carrying lanterns up to Half Moon Wood, on a small hill top. There was a huge bonfire there and we had baked potatoes to eat and we all sang together. It must have been VE day: Victory in Europe.

● Jocelyn Ryder-Smith
August 4 2009

Other memories of Royston...

I remember a short camping holiday I went on with a few other pupils from the school, to Horton's Farm in Royston. We travelled, I believe, all the way from the school in the back of an open lorry! I was probably about 12 or 13 and there were about 6 of us my age, plus perhaps 3 of the 'Big Girls' including Audrey Barber and Tina Bone (I think) who were in charge of us. We were all in tents but the weather was atrocious and we spent the last night sleeping on the floor of one of the farm rooms as the field was flooded out. I think we enjoyed it.

● Janet Marsh – née Brown

I lived in the village of Barley some 3½ miles from Royston and attended the school as a day pupil from 1942 until it returned to London. I used to cycle to school and turn off to ride along a cart track and in by the back gate instead of going right into Royston.

I remember being told on the Friday afternoon, just before going home, that as the school was returning to London, arrangements had been made for me to sit the 11+ exam at 10 am the next day at

Letchworth Grammar school – which I passed. I also recall as a 10-year-old playing football and facing one of the seniors charging down on me shouting "leave it" and "out of the way" before defiantly kicking the ball clear and then being completely flattened – first to some consternation and then to everyone's relieved amusement.

● Clive Bennett

Entertainments on site were mainly of the DIY variety. John Craig had a wind-up gramophone in the junior boys' dorm and we listened endlessly to Glen Miller records. The first school play I remember was called *Thirty Minutes in the Street* and took place in the Big Barn, the 'Street' being the roadway through the double doors. An's tractor was adorned with the school bell and a ladder to become a fire engine, Mr Turner wore a fur costume to become an escaped gorilla, and much fun was had by all.

Christmas party in the Little Barn involved much preparation work. I recall a life-size dancing skeleton on top of the fireplace and a football-sized spider on a giant web slung from the rafters. On dark or wet Saturday

evenings 'entertainments' would be held in the Barn, playing charades or other word games; in summer we played 'Witches'. Will Nickless, one the senior boys, organised a Wolf Cub pack to which we belonged. We played tracking games extending all over the farm, and once or twice made camp by Half Moonwood.

I remember Hyett and Hibby (they worked together in many things) rented a small field on the farm and grew wheat on it. At harvest time I saw Hyett, who was not a young woman then, cutting the corn at harvest by hand with a scythe. Neither of them was ever seen in trousers, Hibby always had bare legs which went purple in the winter. Hibby made bread, presumably from flour ground from their own wheat, which was not of the most appetizing quality. One day, as no doubt you will hear from many others telling this story, some of the boys got a lump of the bread and kneaded it into a sticky mass and threw it against the dining room wall where it stuck. A notice was pinned alongside 'Call this bread – we don't!' I doubt if anyone told Hyett of this, but Hibby's bread did improve afterwards.

● Alan Holmes



The Royston Staff in 1941: L to R (back row): Miss Gillett (Gilly), Jeff, George Moorish, Mr Birkett (front row, seated): Dina Levin, Miss Hyett, Miss Hibburd (Hibby).



Staff at Flint Hall Farm, 1944: (clockwise from top left) Leslie Picknett (parent helper), B.H. Montgomery (Monty), Mr Birkett, Miss Hyett, Renée Soskin (with Gaby on her lap) Miss Hibburd (Hibby)

The King Alfred School

(London Co-educational Day School,
founded in 1898)

HAS EVACUATED TO ROYSTON FOR THE
PERIOD OF THE WAR AS A

BOARDING AND DAY SCHOOL

Boys and girls, ages 6 to 17, at Flint Hall Farm,
London Road, Royston

Nursery Class in a private house on Market Hill,
Royston.

Prospectus and fees from: The Secretary, Flint Hall Farm,
Royston.
1940



KING ALFRED SCHOOL FLINT HALL FARM, ROYSTON, Herts.

MESSRS.
NASH, SON & ROWLEY
(W. T. ROWLEY, F.S.I., F.S.A.)

have been instructed to sell by Auction at THE FARM, on
THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd, 1946, at 2.30 p.m.

A BUILDING

constructed of feather-edged boards, with slated roof 128ft. in length giving a floor space of about 260 square yards divided into 4 Class rooms, Kitchen, Lavatories and Stores to be sold as erected. Also adjoining is a

TIMBER BUILT HUT

with felt roof 31ft. in length by 16ft. in width with glazed Verandah divided into 2 rooms.

A Large Quantity of Fittings

comprising a Smith and Wilestead double oven cooking range, Century Heater with 75 gall. tank, 9 sinks, 14 hand basins, cisterns with taps, Bath, 6 Lavatory pans and two 400 gall. tanks and two 200 gall. ditto, Anthracite and other heating stoves.

CAN BE VIEWED AT ANY REASONABLE TIME.

Catalogues and further particulars from the
AUCTIONEERS, ROYSTON (Tel. 2112) and
BUNTINGFORD (Tel. 123) Herts.

"Oh come to Royston all of you, all of you
As good Alfredians always do, always do
And we'll raise three cheers for the Cottage and the camp
And never mind the weather if its damp, damp, damp."

(School song to the tune of "There's a Tavern in the Town")

Playing Fives

Lyndsay Lloyd Nichols

As a pupil (1928-1935) I used to play fives quite often. I still know how to play it! Quite a simple game. It consists of hitting with a padded gloved hand a ball about the size of a golf ball but with a soft leather covering, around the four walls of the court. These four walls consist of one high wall about 10 to 15 feet high, two sloping walls which joined the back wall which is about five feet high. The ball has to be hit above a certain height (about three feet) on the front wall; this is marked by a plank of wood attached to the concrete of which the courts are built. The server faces one or other of the front corners of the court and tosses the ball on to the front wall so that it bounces on to the side wall; when it bounced back to him off the floor of the court, he hits it hard on to the side wall so that it bounced on to the front wall. That is the service to his opponent, who then returns it in this wall to wall fashion. The back wall can also be used. I believe it is similar to squash, which I've only played once or twice. And the kind of fives at KAS I seem to remember was Rugby fives.

Alan Holmes

I was at KAS from Dec 1940 to Summer 1951... I did play fives - Rugby Fives - in the courts at Manor Wood. Harry Kemp (Maths and Physics) introduced us to the game in 1949/1950. We had special padded gloves as the ball was struck by the palm of the hand against the wall. It could be played with two or four people, and was a popular after school activity - one had to sign a 'permit' sheet outside the school hall if staying late.

Joy Ross (née Richmond)

I was really sad when I learned that the Fives Court at KAS were no longer there. They were for me an essential component of KAS, as it were the cream on top of the hockey/football field, the netball and tennis courts, the Open Air Theatre, of Squirrel Hall itself. It was to the fives courts we fled, in 1927, a class of ten-year olds, to escape the idiotic attempts of some very ill-trained students to teach us music by methods more suited to four-year-olds. I still remember the blazing blue eyes of Miss Gillett, who pursued us, and who told me years later that she had had difficulty in restraining her laughter.

Most of all, however, I remember the fives courts for the matches we played with other schools. Ours had a back wall, I cannot and will not believe you cannot pop down to look at them now and see, which formed part of the in-play. None of the courts we visited at other schools had back walls, or indeed were in any way identical, as one expects tennis courts to be. So at every match the visiting team has to readjust to a very different court from the one they were

accustomed to. This of course was all part of the challenge. I wonder if any of those schools still have their fives courts; I'd love to know. The only name I can remember now is North London Collegiate School.

Alas, I have no photos; can only hope some were taken and survived.

Mary Moser

I am sorry to hear that Fives is no longer played and that the Fives courts are to go. I am probably one of the now oldest OAs who remember playing in them... I left KAS in 1938 and up until that time used them regularly. It was... Rugby Fives we played.

There were not many other schools one could have matches against, but I well remember a number of times playing against what was then known as North London Collegiate School (NLCS), now Camden School for Girls.



My earliest memory of the Fives Courts is of watching others play, probably a match against OAs as I was standing next to an OA who was smoking a cigarette, and the smoke drifting towards me, which at that time I found most unpleasant.

Having played Fives stood me in good stead when I went to LSE where we had Squash Courts available; the courts and the form of play were very similar so it was an easy transition.

Ruth Rigbi (née Landman) also played Fives ("Rugby" Fives) at KAS.

Peter Seglow

I well remember the Fives Courts. There were two and they were certainly used during my time at Manor Wood though not very frequently. I seem to recall it was Eton fives that was played but I can't be certain. It was a (literally) hard game that involved hitting an extremely hard small ball (not unlike a golf ball) with your bare hands against the back or side walls in much the same way as Squash but, of course, using bare hands rather than rackets. I've a vague recollection that at the side of the two courts there was also a hidden path into Wellgarth Road used surreptitiously by some of us perhaps as a short cut if we were late coming up from Golders Green.

I was at KAS first in Branch Hill (of which I still have episodic memories) from late 1944. We were there for I think two years before moving back to Manor Wood after the bitter winter of 1946/7. I left in 1953.

I have many memories of KAS and am still in touch with some (about six) of my fellow pupils.

Nick Bullock

To the Alumni Coordinator:

The article starts with a series of questions. Here are the answers:

- More than you apparently think. (Question: How many of you played Fives at King Alfred School?) I did and there were enough others to fill the two courts most breaks. So there!
- Most intelligent and all observant people. (Question: How many of you even knew there was a fives court at King Alfred School?)
- If there are any who do not know it is a clear indictment of the curriculum or the staff. (Question: how many of you know what "fives" is?)
- Yes, I did but this is unimportant and does not prove anything. (Question: Or that there were different kinds of fives?)

I played regularly, as did Moira Tait, Diana Kadi and my brother Steven. Harry Kemp and Dave Thomas played sometimes. The many others, who may well have included Richard Preston and Lyford ? seem to evaporate when I try to pin names to them, but 'never let the facts interfere

I do not have any photographs, I did not envisage that vandals would come seeking to destroy our beloved Fives courts!

And you have the temerity to ask for money to assist in the wanton destruction - GOSH!

Regarding the building of the courts, I do not have any dates or detail but I do remember my mother telling me that my father, Bruce Bullock, had built them - not single handed presumably.

'We are not amused' by the quip in the last paragraph that Fives courts frequently end up housing portacabins and it is of no credit to Brian. In fact it is a sacrilege and just shows what a degenerate society we live in!

Submitted by a Fives player and son of court builder; mostly 'tongue in cheek' but slightly peaked.

Sebastian Archer

My mother, Marianna Archer (nee Collingwood) is now 92 (dob 6/1/1917), and receives the Alfredians newsletter.

Entry year 1925, leaving year 1933.

As the Spring edition carried the article on Fives, I asked her about her recollections:

Marianna ("Masha") played fives against her classmate and good friend Renee Beloff (now deceased), and her 3 years younger brother Cedric Collingwood. She said it was a very lively game, and both these opponents were quite aggressive at pushing her out of the way to get to the ball!

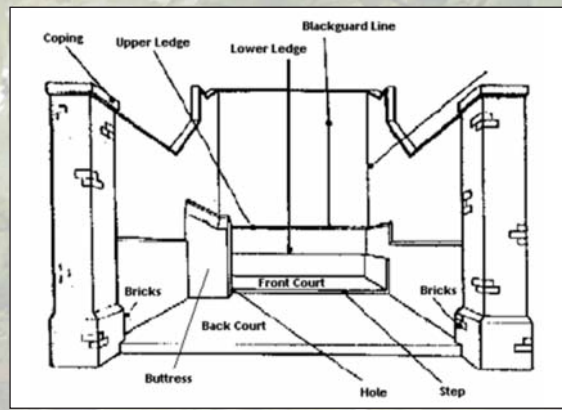
Marianna played Juliet to Renee's Romeo in the school play, directed by Elizabeth Jenkins, the English teacher.

Renee's siblings also attended at that time - Max (older), Norma and John Beloff.

Marianna went on to the Royal College of Music where she played viola in the orchestra under Sir Malcolm Sargeant among other conductors. During the war she married William Archer, and after the war they lived in South Africa on a fruit farm for a while, before all (now with 4 children) returning to England to do market gardening in Oxfordshire, where she still lives.



"A miniature from an English 15th century manuscript in the British Library," shows two men playing Fives each wearing a white glove in the right hand



Naomi Hull (Elkan)

I used to go down to the fives court whenever possible (as a pupil, not later as a teacher). Although I had proper fives gloves, playing hurt my hands considerably, but I found the game beneficial in getting rid of tension - as opposed to any other form of exercise at KAS except doing estate work, but I think that fizzled out fairly soon after the war.

Janet Marsh (née Brown)

...Yes, I played fives but only on a casual basis during breaks, and I never owned a glove to wear for it. I don't know if anyone played it seriously. It was always joked that that was where one took one's boyfriend or girlfriend. As far as I can remember, there were just 2 plain concrete courts, similar to squash courts, often wet underfoot. I've certainly got no photographs.

FIVES SONG

Hand that is lithesome, foot that is quick,
Backed by an active brain.
Body that moves like a conjuror's trick,
Spirits that never wane.
Unflagging, unceasing, its prey ne'er releasing
The hand drives the little white ball.
Not a nerve but is braced in exuberant haste
To smack the little white ball.
Come, let us sport and, be glad, said the ball,
Skipping in eager glee.
Swift as an arrow, it speeds to the wall,
Swift it returns to me.
Little white ball, O little white ball,
May your life among Gowers be long,
For e'en though you're batter'd or tatter'd or shatter'd,
Another one's coming along.

Words by L H Stern

Karin Andersson (nee Weaver)

... I was one of a very few who played Fives during my time at KAS. The court seemed to be in an isolated area at the bottom of the garden. I thought we were playing under "Harrow" rules. Rugby Fives doesn't ring a bell.

Some helpful notes by Nick Alwyn

Courts were Winchester 5s because of the small butters at the back. Otherwise like Rugby Fives. I played with Daniel Thomas, then woodwork teacher and other boys vs masters – including infamous Philip.

Courts were played a lot in break and after lunch in early 50s. We played with or without gloves. I also played Rugby 5s when at Cambridge.

Great game. You should restore them. Improve peoples' tennis and squash.

1938

Are you in the picture?

This is the 1938 KAS school photo. Are you in the picture? Can you identify anyone? We would love to hear from you if you can. Please drop us a line.





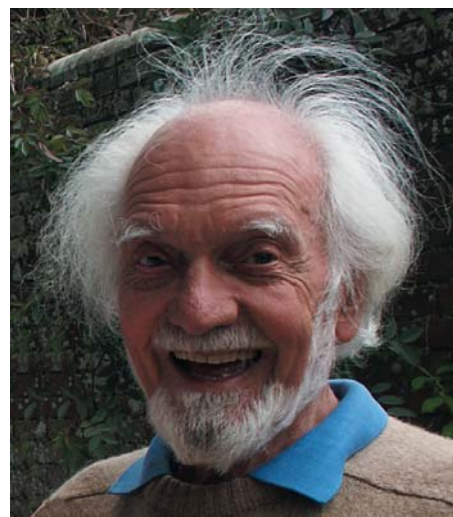
John Picknett

Born 9 May 1926 – Died 27 March 2009

John grew up in Croydon and Hampstead, where he became a pupil at King Alfred School. In the war he was evacuated with the school to Flint Hall Farm, Royston, and spent a very happy time there. When older, he and his father Leslie enjoyed many cycling holidays, riding tandem through Wales and the Lake District. He had a brilliant mind and graduated at the age of 20 as a civil engineer. Later he became a structural engineer and even later a water engineer, working on dam projects and the Thames tidal defences. Being fascinated by the Thames, he explored the river from its source (a puddle in a field) and followed it down from its first navigable stream all the way to London in a canoe. He spent six years in the Latin Quarter in

Paris, living in a hotel overlooking Notre Dame, and then five working in Italy, in an idyllic location facing the Mediterranean, with a view of Elba and Corsica on the horizon. For 28 years he lived in Shoreham, Kent, where he loved to walk in the hills and the bluebell woods, and he ended his life in Tenterden, where his wife and two of their four children now live.

John had strong moral beliefs, perhaps most closely resonant with those of Buddhism. If asked to choose which religion he most closely identified with, he would say Buddhist, although he never practised formally. He was immensely compassionate and thoughtful about others. He believed in doing the right thing for its own sake, without reference to any religious moral



framework. John aspired to the Buddhist ideals of 'right thought', 'right action', 'right livelihood', with consideration for other people's lives and the responsibility one had to take care of those that one's life touched. Above all, John valued the unity and deep common bond of his wife, Jeanne-Marie, their children and their families.

Steven Bullock

Steven Bullock died, aged 72, on 27th March, he was the elder son of Bruce Bullock and Olive Rapson, both KAS pupils, and was at KAS with his brother Nicholas from 1948 to 1956.

Steven was well liked at KAS and amongst other things he will be remembered for his cricketing prowess, his carpentry skill, his altruism and for being a conscientious member of the School Four.

Steven was a quiet, unassuming, gentle and sincere man who during his working life played a pivotal role in British agriculture. After leaving KAS with a creditable crop of O and A levels he went to Wye College, University of London, achieving a good B.Sc in General Agriculture and a National Diploma in Agriculture. At Wye he involved himself in college life, ran the 'Wye Press' and was a member of the 2nd squash team. He then went on to Leeds University where he gained a Post Graduate Diploma in Farm Management. Following this he farmed for two years before becoming Managing Director of the Farmers Weekly's group of nine farms in 1963.

The Farmers Weekly had set up these farms, as a test bed for new ideas and innovations. Steven reported regularly and fully, in the periodical, on the activities, progress and problems on the farms. His role in managing the farms from 1963 to 1988 coincided with the era dubbed the Second Agricultural Revolution. It was a period during which there was a rapid uptake of science based innovations,

revolutionising farming methods and increasing productivity by leaps and bounds. New management methods, based on financial as well as physical performance, were introduced and Steven's reporting gave farmers an important insight into the rapid changes that were taking place.

In 1988 Steven moved on to take over as Director of the Nuffield Farming Scholarships organisation. This was set up, with the help of the Nuffield Foundation, to identify and give keen young people the opportunity to study the latest developments in farming methods overseas. Indeed Steven himself received a scholarship in 1976. Over a period of several years the farming industry took over responsibility, from the Foundation, for financing and running the organisation and for the selection of scholars. Steven over-saw this transition and consolidation, and the incorporation of the Nuffield Farming Scholarship Trust. Besides his responsibilities relating to the UK trust and scholars, Steven was also heavily involved with the arrangements for the visiting of overseas scholars from Commonwealth countries, Southern Ireland and France.

Even after Steven retired as the Director in 2001, he continued to play an active role by undertaking the arduous task of compiling the Trust's Annual Report and over-seeing the publication of the returning scholars' reports until April 2008.

In 2007 Steven and his wife Gill generously instigated their award for the scholar who had best demonstrated a



'change in outlook and activity stimulated by their Nuffield Experience and its application.'

Steven had many links with agricultural industry. He was a Liveryman of the Worshipful Company of Farmers; a member of the Royal Agricultural Society, the Farmers Club and the Mid-Sussex Farm Management Discussion Group; Secretary of the Ruminators Discussion Group and a past Chairman of the Sussex Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group.

He served for 8 years as a councillor on Wealden District Council, chairing the Area Planning Committee for a period.

His list of leisure activities included reading, stamp collecting, travel, DIY and enjoying the property he and Gill lovingly restored in the South of France.

He is survived by Gillian, a research scientist whom he married in 1963, their two sons, Neil and Tim, and six adored grandchildren.

Peter Zadek

Theatre director, born 19 May 1926; died 30 July 2009

Peter Zadek, who has died aged 83, is survived by his long-time partner, Elisabeth Plessen, a daughter Michele and a son Simon. He always wanted his grandchildren to be educated at King Alfred's as he was an ardent admirer of AS Neill and the ethos of progressive education and remembered his years at KAS as being some of the best of his life in London. He was thrilled when all his grandchildren, Poppy, Oscar and Felix, joined King Alfred School at the age of 4 and he felt that they would now be able to lead the kind of lives he would wish for them.

He was one of a trio of young directors – with Peter Stein and Claus Peymann – who revitalised the West German theatre in the 1970s. They were a generation too old to be directly marked by Nazi Germany, but young enough to reject the collective amnesia that afflicted the wartime generation. While all three challenged the apolitical and predominantly aesthetic principles that dominated the German stage for more than 20 years after the war, Zadek differed from the other two in that his notion of theatre had been formed in England.

Zadek was born into an assimilated Berlin Jewish family. His father was a salesman who, on a business trip to England in 1934, made a snap and, as it turned out, inspired decision to stay in London and send for his family. Zadek grew up in Hampstead Way, going to King Alfred School from the age of 8. When he was 13, he put on his first production in the amphitheatre – *Peter Pan*, directed and starring himself, of course, as Captain Hook. From there to Oxford, only to decide after a year that academic life was not for him. Nonetheless, a bit part in an Oxford dramatic society production of *Measure for Measure* alongside Richard Burton left him smitten by the theatre, and he trained at the Old Vic school under Michel Saint-Denis, Glen Byam Shaw and Tyrone Guthrie. His studies were once again terminated at the end of his first year: a suspect inclination to experiment had been detected. He was, however, determined to be a director, and after a series of small-scale productions, notably Jean Genet's *The Maids*, in French, in 1952 at the Mercury Theatre Club in Notting Hill, which was reprised at the Royal Court, he jumped at the chance of a year at the Palace Theatre, Swansea, and later at Pontypridd.

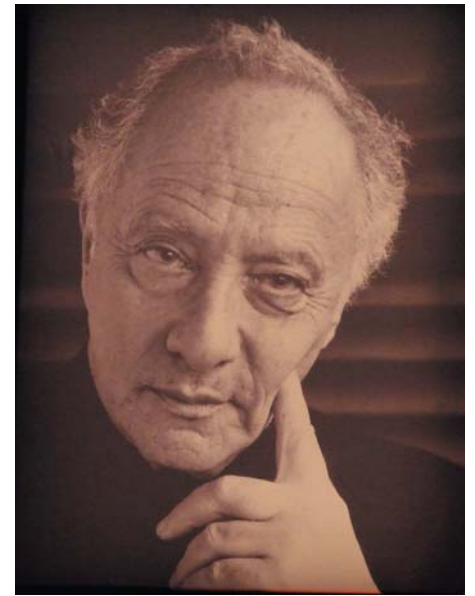
In 1957, back in London, he directed the world premiere of Genet's *The Balcony* at the Arts Theatre Club. Genet, who had

given him the rights after the success of *The Maids*, took exception to his realistic approach and appeared at a rehearsal brandishing a revolver and threatening to shoot him.

Zadek remained an outsider in the closed world of London theatre. His friend Tom Blumenau advised him to go abroad, and in 1957 he appalled his Jewish friends by moving back to Cologne. Although at first he needed an interpreter, his German soon came back, but he then had to learn to shout because the actors would not take direction in his polite English German. He immediately felt at home, enjoying the ample rehearsal time and material resources available in Germany's generously subsidised theatres. In 1959 he was recruited by Kurt Hübner for the Ulm municipal theatre, where his productions of Shakespeare, Sean O'Casey and Brendan Behan, all translated into German, were well received. His first of many nominations came at this point, for the annual Berlin Theatertreffen festival.

In 1962 he moved with Hübner to Bremen where, along with designer Wilfried Minks, they developed the "Bremen style", a mixture of Pop Art and a cool, somewhat Brechtian way of handling actors: Bertolt Brecht, in East Germany, had advocated a style of performance in which the actor was to be objective and not identify with the role. For Zadek it was a way of counteracting the more stylised, histrionic approach he found in the Federal Republic. Bremen became the leading theatre in Germany in the 1960s. In the 1970s he achieved notoriety with a string of polemical Shakespeare productions – *The Merchant of Venice*, *King Lear*, *Othello*, *Hamlet* – purporting to return the Bard to his popular roots and intended to scandalise the Abonnten, the ageing, middlebrow season-ticket-holders whose tastes he felt hamstrung the repertoire. For *King Lear*, the cast selected their own costumes from a heap on the rehearsal room floor. Lear dandled Cordelia on his knee in a pink tutu. Ulrich Wildgruber, a lumbering, inarticulate Othello, mauled a sun-bathing Desdemona, smearing her body and bikini in black greasepaint.

This was Zadek's wildest phase. He directed *The Merchant of Venice* four times in all. In the aftermath of Hitler's Third Reich, the actor Ernst Deutsch had redefined Shylock as the noble Jew. In 1961 in Ulm, Zadek confronted an uneasy audience with an anti-Christian Shylock, reasoning that if



the Germans were to come to terms with the Holocaust, they had to see that Jews could have negative sides.

In 1988 at the Vienna Burgtheater, as a result of his changing view of Israel, he had Gert Voss play Shylock as a potential killer. Zadek hardly ever directed German classics or Brecht, favouring mavericks such as Frank Wedekind or moderns like Tankred Dorst.

His approach in the 1980s became less provocative, and more sensitive and controlled, and a string of interpretations of Chekhov, Ibsen and Strindberg met with critical and public acclaim. The Burgtheater – the richest theatre in the German-speaking world, where all the stars tend to end up – became his base, and his spellbindingly simple production of *Chekhov's Ivanov* in 1990 at its partner institution, the Akademie-theater, on a bare set with an array of old chairs, is unforgotten. Zadek's last years were plagued by ill-health but he went on working. His last production was an all-star *Major Barbara* at the Zürich Schauspielhaus in January this year.

He was director of the Bochum Theatre from 1972 to 1977, the Hamburg Schauspielhaus from 1985 to 1989 and co-director of the Berliner Ensemble with Heiner Müller and Peter Palitzsch from 1993 to 1995. Four of his productions – *The Merchant of Venice*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Hamlet* and *Peer Gynt* – came to the Edinburgh Festival.

Zadek was a combative, individualistic director, critical but with no political line. The suggestion that there might be a Zadek style was enough to make him wonder what he had done wrong. He had a winning personal manner and commanded loyalty from a select band of distinguished actors who would always answer his call. He would allow them to find their own rhythms and movements, and he had the happy knack of melding their inventions into a harmonious whole.



Jenny Jackson writes:

I was thrilled and amazed to finally open my spring edition of the Alfredian and find myself staring at a favourite photograph of mine...the 1947 school line-up!

... I would so like to be able to connect up to one or two of my school friends from those days which were the only happy school days I ever had! (I played Puck in the school performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream!*)

I would really love to hear from anyone who remembers those days and me!

(jeni@hermanus.co.za)

I live now permanently in one of the most beautiful spots on earth - the whale-watching mecca of Hermanus, one and a half hours drive from Cape Town. The landscape beggars description and the friendliness of the blacks and coloureds and their cheerfulness in the face of extraordinary odds is salutary, to say the least. The Christian religion plays more part in every day life than I am comfortable with personally, especially as it does not seem to make the worshippers better people, rather it allows them to commit acts that God as I came to know him (though we only had a passing acquaintance) would have abhorred!

A big, and very grateful hug for King Alfred and its teachers for everything they did to take us forward from the dreadful war years.

Janet Kirsch says:

I was at the school then (1947) and remember a few people.... I married young to a glove manufacturer. I have four children, many grandchildren and many great-grandchildren. Have done voluntary work most of my married life and chaired several branches of organisations. My high point at KAS was appearing in shows put on by Drama Teacher Renée Soskin. The low point was walking up North End Road the winter of 1947!

Charles Posner sends this in:

Having just reached retirement age. I am still working in the civil engineering industry, and am now concentrating on training others in attaining professional qualifications, health and safety management and written communications.

I would be happy to provide careers advice to students considering engineering. (cdposner@gmail.com) *(Thanks – I am passing on your details to the KAS careers advisor – editor)*

Karin Andersson (née Weaver) sends us greetings from Australia:

Imagine my surprise when I opened the centre of the "Alfredians" Spring 2009 to find myself in the photo! Top picture, back row, first girl on the right....

I saw a copy of a book about KAS some years ago where a photo of the 47/48 hockey team was printed. The players weren't named. I am the one in the front with ball at my stick as I was the captain that year. Another photo, but perhaps only in a newspaper, were four us along a branch heading for the tree house (May, Barbara Hawkins, Gilly Cowen and me).

I was editor of the wall newspaper during 1947 and '48 and on school council. I was always in drama productions as Renée Soskin didn't attract enough of the boys and I was tall (and not very feminine) to play male parts unlike my best friend, Gillian Cowen, who was cast in dramatic, romantic roles...

I attended Fortis Green School in Aspley Guise during the war years of '40 to '42. It became a boarding school when it was evacuated from London. Fred Johnson, History teacher at KAS after the war, was connected with Fortis Green School while I was there and we were delighted when we met up again at KAS. He and Ros took 12 (?) of us to Switzerland at Easter 1946, being the school's first trip abroad.

My family has become very conservation aware. I have a 300 acre property here in Killabakh (population 290) at the foothills of part of the Great Dividing Range and have put 95% under a permanent conservation agreement. (kandersson@bigpond.com)

Martin Huiskens sends us his details for publication:

3a Greenheys Gardens, Septon Park Road, Liverpool L8 OTJ, 0151 733 8329,

(chironcentre@hotmail.co.uk) and web address: www.chiron.org.uk

He adds: "I think of my time at KAS with fondness. It was a haven in a very chaotic and stressful time. You planted the seeds that allowed me to develop my own ideas – rather than becoming a Robot Sheep. Thanks! What part is KAS playing in the self-sufficiency transition London movement?"

Ruth Rigbi (née Landman) also sends us information about herself:

Living at 11 Moshe Kol Street, Apartment 15, Jerusalem 93715, Israel (meirr@cc.huji.ac.il)

She was a Lecturer in English at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and worked as a translator and editor. She is the widow of the biochemist, Professor Meir Rigbi, mother of 2 daughters and grandmother of 4 granddaughters. Her brother David Lindman lives in London (VFDL@aol.com) *(Appologies for the delay in publishing this – ed)*

Misha Norland



This is just to let you know that my image is in the school photo of 1957 (in the "Alfredians" of Spring 2008). A few years ago, whilst walking on Brighton sea front I was greeted by a woman, who recognized me from 1957 as an old Alfredian. I've obviously not changed much!

Thank you for reproducing old school photos.

Simon Peter (1955-1965 – I think)

I was intrigued to read in the Summer issue of "Snapshot" (2008), Dawn's article in praise of the school's "rolling stock". I know that in these difficult economic times schools have to raise money where they can, but is a venture into running a railway really a good idea?

The school is close to Golders Green station, which has not only an Underground service, but also the trusty 210. When I used the 210, the fair to school was, as I remember, 1½ d or ½ p in 'new money'. Given the existing transport infrastructure, I think that starting a King Alfred School Railway might be a very poor move indeed.

Continued...

Janette Beckman

I am an old Alfredian, 1953 -1967. I am a photographer, living in NYC and here is link to my bio and website:

<http://www.janettebeckman.com/#id=15&num=5> – and strangely one of my best friends here in NYC happens to be another old Alfredian – we met here through the world of photography – and I am now godmother to her kids.

Janette Beckman, Photographer

t 212 477 3430

m 646 267 1558

www.janettebeckman.com

www.janettebeckman.com/jb.rocks

Stephen Genis (KAS 1969-75) has also written to us from Australia:

After KAS, he went out into the real world & started working. He is now Director & C.E.O of Stikki Products Pty Ltd. Stephen

has been married to Joanna for 16 years, and they have two children, Jasmine 11 & Daniel 8.

Yvonne Wells (née Lehmann) (KAS, 1938-43) has given us an update:

Glamorgan CC (planning), very discouraging! The Horace Plunkett Foundation, Family Farm Credit Enquiry. Very encouraging.

1950: marriage, two children. Great. Passive periparetic life with geological exploration husband. Ceylon, Yorkshire Dales, Libya, Iran, Eastern and Southern Africa, Turkey, Oman, Canada, intervening stays The Hague. Active interest in their historical geography, archaeology, languages. TEFL led to Speech, language and Neuropsychological Therapy with trauma brain-injured.

Deaths

Joy Ross, née Richmond, wrote to tell us that her brother, **Nigel Richmond**, who was at KAS from 1927 to 1937, died in 2007.

Andreas Costas, aged 34, died of cancer on 21st October 2009. His wife, Nehal (née Patel) was a pupil at KAS from Reception to Year 13, leaving in 1996. If any old friends and staff would like to get in touch, her address is 23 Chantry Road, Chessington, Surrey, KT9 1JR. E-mail: neh36@hotmail.com

Joan Charmian Protheroe, née Mason – Born 2 May 1922, Died 25 July 2008.

Joan was at KAS from 1928 to 1939, then went on to the Royal Free Medical School. She received an MRCS LRCP and was a Fellow of the College of Anaesthetists. She practiced as an anaesthetist. Joan married Dr RHB Protheroe, a consultant pathologist, in 1952. They had 4 children, 3 girls and 1 boy.

Esther Flinn (née Knight), born 7 November 1930, died 23 August 2008

Her husband, Michael Flinn, has sent us this:

"Esther was never a pupil at the school. She did her teacher training at the Froebel Educational Institute and started teaching at

a State school. After a few years, she came to KAS where she taught for the rest of her time there in the junior department. I think she was teaching the first post-Nursery class until 1963 when she swapped over to the Nursery for her final year. At the end of that year, i.e. 1964, I persuaded her to resign and marry me.

After July 1964, Esther came to Trinidad, where we were married (at the NY Zoological Society Tropical Research Station). We 'commuted' between Trinidad and Cambridge, Mass., USA for a year or so, then settled in Cambridge, where I worked for Harvard University for about 2 more years. During this time, Esther did some child-minding for a friend and then helped in a preschool play group. We returned to England in 1967. Esther brought up our daughter (born 1968) and from time to time helped out in local schools, sometimes as an unpaid volunteer and sometimes as a paid temporary teacher when needed.

Her life became increasingly difficult for her and in time she needed so much care that it became necessary to have her in a nursing home to where she transferred quite happily in 2005. In August 2008, she died."

David Waterman (KAS 1946/7 to 1953), on Sunday 20 September 2009.

A word...

...from the Editor

As you will notice, we have moved from 8 to 12 pages. I hope to continue with this format and that you don't find it all too much of a good thing. I have tried to include as many of your contributions as possible and to do some catching up as well.

The 1947 photo from last time generated dozens of responses and I hope to publish the photo again, this time with as many names as possible filled in.

As always, I apologise for any errors – the task of decyphering is not always easy. But please do keep sending us your comments, thoughts, memories and updated information. This is what I thrive on.

● Peter Palliser



Alfredians Spring 2009. Alfredians is a biannual newsletter distributed in May/June and October/November.

We always welcome news and memories from Old Alfredians for publication. All copy should be sent to:

Alumni Coordinator, King Alfred School,
Manor Wood, 149 North End Road,
London NW11 7HY

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Tel: +44 (0)20 8457 5282

Fax: +44 (0)20 8457 5249

PLEASE KEEP US INFORMED OF ANY CHANGES OF ADDRESS.

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Are you in your sixties?

Over the last few years there has been a small gathering around Christmas of Old Alfredians in the Holly Bush Pub in Hampstead. We meet around 8pm, have a couple of drinks and adjourn for a simple meal in one of the restaurants in Heath Street.

We meet on Tuesday before Christmas Eve – this year 2009 the 22nd. Amongst those who often turn up are Simon Peters, John Mason, Greg Mitchell, Derek Cheek, Ulf Ehrenmark, Anton Smith, Chris Kellerman and Robert Luckham. It would be particularly nice to see some of our former female classmates with or without Husbands or Partners – we are beginning to think we went to an all Boys School. Anyone just turn up.

If any confirmation or directions are required, contact Anton Smith: e-mail antonsmith@blueyonder.co.uk or mobile 07960 828858.

Siobhan Morris

Siobhan is the Winner of the 2009 Success in the Face of Adversity Award. Described as “an exceptional student on the art and design foundation course last year” at City Lit, she earned a distinction for her mixed-media paintings, which were based on her experiences of having an on-going illness and how this affected her memories of childhood.

Siobhan was nominated for the award by Jayne Kay, of the Visual Arts department because “her illness meant that she had to work from home much of the time.

She was in and out of hospital frequently and is currently awaiting a lung transplant. Despite this, she was extremely determined and self-motivated and the work she produced was of a very high standard. Siobhan was an inspiration to both her tutors and her fellow students for the way in which she embraced the course and used her experiences in a positive way.”



At last Tom and Victoria get married!



After meeting at King Alfred School aged 13, we became inseparable (apart from several years at Uni!) and finally married in November 2008. We formed many of our closest friends at King Alfred's and all of the wedding party in the picture are old Alfredians – Matthew Keverne (Tom's brother), Matthew Trusler, Rex Siney and my sisters Beth and Anna Weatherby.

Ramster, Chiddingfold was the gorgeous setting for our wedding. Surrounded by

candles, flowers, champagne and delicious food (although I couldn't eat much!) we had a great day. It made it extra special to have so many school friends (and their new partners) to celebrate with – Rebecca Prebble, Kate Mastel and Guy Coleman (Ari Andricopoulos I know you were with us in spirit from your trip to South America!).

Thanks to good friends, a wonderful school and to Mum and Dad for sending me there!



Lucy Jones

“Over the Hill” by Lucy Jones has been short-listed for the Threadneedle Prize – probably the most important art prize in the UK for figurative painting and sculpture.

Diary



Open Day

Saturday 26 June

1.00 to 3.30pm

Reception: 4.00 to 6.00pm

For further information, contact the Alumni Office on 020 8457 5282 email oa@kingalfred.org.uk or use the link on the website.