

Alfredians



A newsletter for King Alfred School Alumni

Spring 2009

The Fives Project

**A call for help, for memories,
for photographs**

How many of you played Fives at King Alfred School? How many of you even knew there was a fives court at King Alfred School? Indeed how many of you know what "fives" is? Or that there were different kinds of fives: Eton Fives, Rugby Fives, Winchester Fives, even Clifton Fives.

A recent visitor thought that the variant played at KAS was Rugby fives – from the scoring system recorded in our archives.

And this is what our archivist, Brian Rance, has told me:

"The two courts have not yet been demolished. They were built in 1926/7 on ground leased to a club, the members of which seem to have comprised parents, pupils and ex-pupils of the school. The archives contain match reports from 1928.

It seems that the club was short lived, because the Annual Report of 1929 reveals that the school had taken back control. After the war, there are reports of repairs to the fives court in 1949. I understand that they remained in use until the 1960s. I have been with the school since 1983, during which time they have sadly been derelict. Recently, they have housed portacabins, variously used for music lessons and storage."

Brian further told me that, apparently, fives courts frequently end up housing portacabins – it seems it's a natural spot for them.

The Appeal

If any of you out there remember playing, remember what they looked like in their prime (see the photo of them now), please write in and let us know. Also, if you have photographs of the fives courts and can scan them or spare copies or even are willing to let us borrow them or have them, we would be very grateful.



And finally, and very importantly,

Another Kind of Appeal

You may remember that in last year's Spring edition of "Alfredians", I highlighted the new building we are hoping to construct next year. The new building will go where the fives courts have been – thus Brian's mention of demolition. A few things have changed since then – the world economy for one. It became apparent that the present financial crisis had made it impossible to raise the amount of money needed in time for building to start this summer. It was no longer appropriate to run an extensive fundraising programme over the last few months.

We now hope to begin main construction in the summer of 2010. This does not mean that the Fives Court Project itself has been halted. We are just phasing it in more slowly. Last summer saw

the construction of a new Lower School music suite and the development of new Year 3 classrooms. This summer, the Lower School playground will be redeveloped, the farm moved to a new position and the growing areas improved.

If you remember, the budget for the whole project was put at £2.5 million, with the school contributing £500,000 out of budget. But we are confident that we can benefit from the significant fall in tender prices and over the next couple of months we will be re-costing the building design to achieve best value for the school. We do believe we will be able to reduce the building costs substantially.

In the meantime, we could use all the help that you can muster. There is a long line of parents that have made the existence of the school possible. I hope you, as Old Alfredians will join them, if you can. Enclosed in this edition is a donation form, with a gift aid section. We hope many of you will use it.

Hands Across the Sea

During my last year at KAS there was added an extra dimension to my Education under the tutorship of the Council for Education in World Citizenship, a part of the United Nations. Schools from all over the country were invited to take part. Wendy Long and I represented KAS. It was 1959, and I have chosen Noel Coward's title for my article, as KAS had put on his set of plays "Tonight at Eight-Thirty" the day before we left. "Hands Across the Sea" was the story of a couple's party but they haven't a clue who their guests are. This was strangely appropriate for our trip the next day as the stated aim of the CEWC was to teach us who we were and our role as world citizens. I played a Mr. Burnham who never fully explains himself; Gabby Soskin was the hostess and the whole production was produced and directed by her mother, Renee Soskin. The problem is never fully resolved and the guests part on amicable but totally mystified terms. The following day our hands did indeed stretch across the sea to Italy. We had a role on the world stage.

My education however was to take another strange turn when I found I was the only boy amongst thirty two girls! Combine this with Italy and you begin to get a picture of the new direction my education was taking! The Italians clearly thought a new

Romeo had arrived and there was much cheering, and some jeering wherever we went. This was an unlikely role for me as I was a studious and very awkward eighteen year old. The whole trip was by coach with a large contingent from Scotland with Scottish songs dominating the in-coach entertainment. Our destination was Rome and I remember having an official letter from my father Ernest Raymond for an introduction to the Keats Shelley Memorial Museum in Rome. My father was a member of the Keats Shelley Memorial Society, having written their biographies in "Two Gentlemen of Rome." We were given an urn which actually contained the smell of incense used on drowned Shelley's funeral pyre. We were breathing literary history. Rome was indeed a place where time had a new dimension as we listened for the ghosts in the Colosseum and stood waiting for senators to appear in the Forum. We had learnt that we were inheritors of the classical world.

Our accommodation varied in star ratings with one strange place in Rome which was a very noisy local hotel; the perennial problem was where to put me as I had to have a berth separate from the girls. I was allocated Room number 13 which I found a little worrying and even more so when I found it was next to the Bar. It wasn't

13 at all but "B" for bar! I had little sleep that night. We waited in the Vatican and St. Peter's Cathedral as Pope John Paul was carried in on a sort of tray by the Swiss Guards. He greeted us in many different languages, clearly doing his best for the Family of Man, but when it came to English, a storm of booing began. I was standing in the midst of the Presbyterian Scots; the whole division in the Church since the Reformation was written on the girls' faces. Not every lesson in world citizenship was taken on board.

We also got to Pisa where we hadn't taken lessons in health and safety as the girls insisted on climbing to the top of the leaning tower. This left me in a difficult situation. How could I allow the girls to climb this vertigo inducing edifice and me, a boy, chicken out? I followed and it was one of the most terrifying experiences of my life. It was all right climbing where the tower leans away from the ground, but where the tower leans towards the ground, there is nothing between you and eternity. It was a lesson in group citizenship learnt the hard way.

On our return after three weeks I can honestly say that, like Coleridge's Ancient Mariner with his weathered hand from across the sea, we were older and wiser but not sadder. We had seen ourselves and our place in time and the world and we had learnt: who knows themselves, who only themselves know.

● Peter Raymond, May 2008

The 1970s KAS Reunion Group



In our fifth annual reunion, the 1970s Old Alfredians doubled their numbers and even challenged the current KAS teachers to a hard-fought football game.

This has now inspired the "Very Old Boys" to get into shape for next year's revenge match.

We had two reunions, one at The Old

Bull and Bush and one at an Italian restaurant in Golders Green. We also called Liz Turner-Samuels in Australia, as she was discovered in the Blue Mountains this year.

Look forward to hearing from anybody who wishes to join us for Reunion 2010. Please send e-mails to Kim Franklin at drfranklinkim32@yahoo.com



Top row; L to R, Steve Lytleton, Dany Clunies-Ross, Jonathan Venning, Louise Vines, Nick Clunies-Ross, Philip Sharkey, Daniel Kossoff, Joe Bhatti and Tod Hodson. **Bottom row;** Natasha Marcetic, Peter Lewenstein, Jeff Roberts, Kim Franklin and Rebecca Weinberg. In the smaller photo, the following are also included: Sukey Elstob, Lee Hanison, Tim Haninson, John Wallace, and Martin Treacher, with his Son Jack.

One Year Left and it's you with the power of change

Daniel Vockins, former KAS student, on his experience of the UN Climate Negotiations as a UK Youth delegate in December.

"Walking through the halls at the UN Climate Negotiations in Poznan last December, you'd be forgiven for thinking you were at the heart of the struggle to defeat dangerous climate change. Top-level ministers from every government in the world met to forge a global agreement, the contents of which will decide how the latter half of this century plays out. But from my experience as a UK youth delegate, the real decisions are not made at the UN.

Woven through the endless meetings, lobbying sessions, cocktail parties and plenaries was a palpable sense that we will pass the critical 2 degrees tipping point causing 'runaway' climate change with the very real possibility of 6 degree temperature rises within this century. Forget far off impacts for our grandchildren, this is about you and me over the next 50 years. At the talks, negotiators repeated ad nauseam the party line about how CO₂ concentrations of 450 parts per million will stave off the worst impacts of climate change, whilst being briefed behind closed doors about exactly how out of date this target is. When we cornered negotiators with questions like these, they often admitted the contradiction. It's exasperating to watch, because we know that the time left to act is running out.

Is there an end to this? Not within the conference halls. Negotiators appear to have little freedom to negotiate freely. One NGO put it to me that up to 90% of their platform is pre-determined before they even step on the plane. With special interests, short-termist electoral cycles and near instantaneous judgement by stock market edict, it is easy to see why governments act in this way. Operating within such rigid parameters, our negotiators are essentially players in a game. The small slice of autonomy granted to negotiators offers precious little potential for a breakthrough, and is certainly not enough to secure a deal which takes the latest scientific discoveries seriously.

So, what do we need now? Firstly, to recognise that we are a long way from where we need to be and second, to understand that our power lies in the ability to make a just agreement possible. Negotiators are not principally champions of humanity or social justice. They're playing a game, according to the rules they're given. Their capacity to act is limited by what is politically acceptable.

Nonetheless, politicians as individuals want to act on this - nobody who has seen



the true scale of this problem couldn't. But at the moment, taking meaningful action necessitates defying the negotiating position set by domestic governments, which means losing your job. By Copenhagen next year, where the final treaty will be agreed, the playing field must look substantially different. In essence, the ground rules must be that taking strong action on climate change is the only way a treaty can be signed because the public will accept nothing less.

To drive this point home, just a few weeks ago Climate Change and Energy Secretary Ed Miliband called for a "popular mobilisation" to make it possible for the process to move forward, whilst Al Gore has said publicly that he "can't understand why there aren't rings of young people blocking bulldozers and preventing them from constructing coal-fired power plants." We should think seriously about this call to action - it comes from a place of real desperation and an awareness of the limitations of a politics not yet built to deal with a problem like climate change.

Having watched the negotiations for two weeks, I can tell you that if the situation continues as it is currently, we will fail to halt runaway climate change. The enormity of this statement should not be underestimated. In the time remaining before Copenhagen next December we must substantially alter the context of the debate to make it impossible not to act. Many more campaigns like those that forced through the Climate Act in the UK will be needed and on a far bigger scale, which is why I'm writing this article. Although I find it uncomfortable to do so, I'm asking everyone I can think of to consider their role in the next year. I know that without powerful new voices, like your own, we will not get the global deal that the science demands.

I'm not sure how each one of us fits into this puzzle but I am sure that the power of change is currently with us, not in the halls of the UN. The next year is the most important in human history. It's up to us to determine how it plays out."

Diary



All Old Alfredians and their families are warmly invited to the following events:

Open Day

(a reminder) Saturday 4th July,
12 noon to 4pm. Reception 4-5pm

Bonfire Night

Saturday 7 November 2009, 6pm-9pm
Drinks in the Old Library for Alumni
6:30-7:30pm

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

Apologies from the editor...

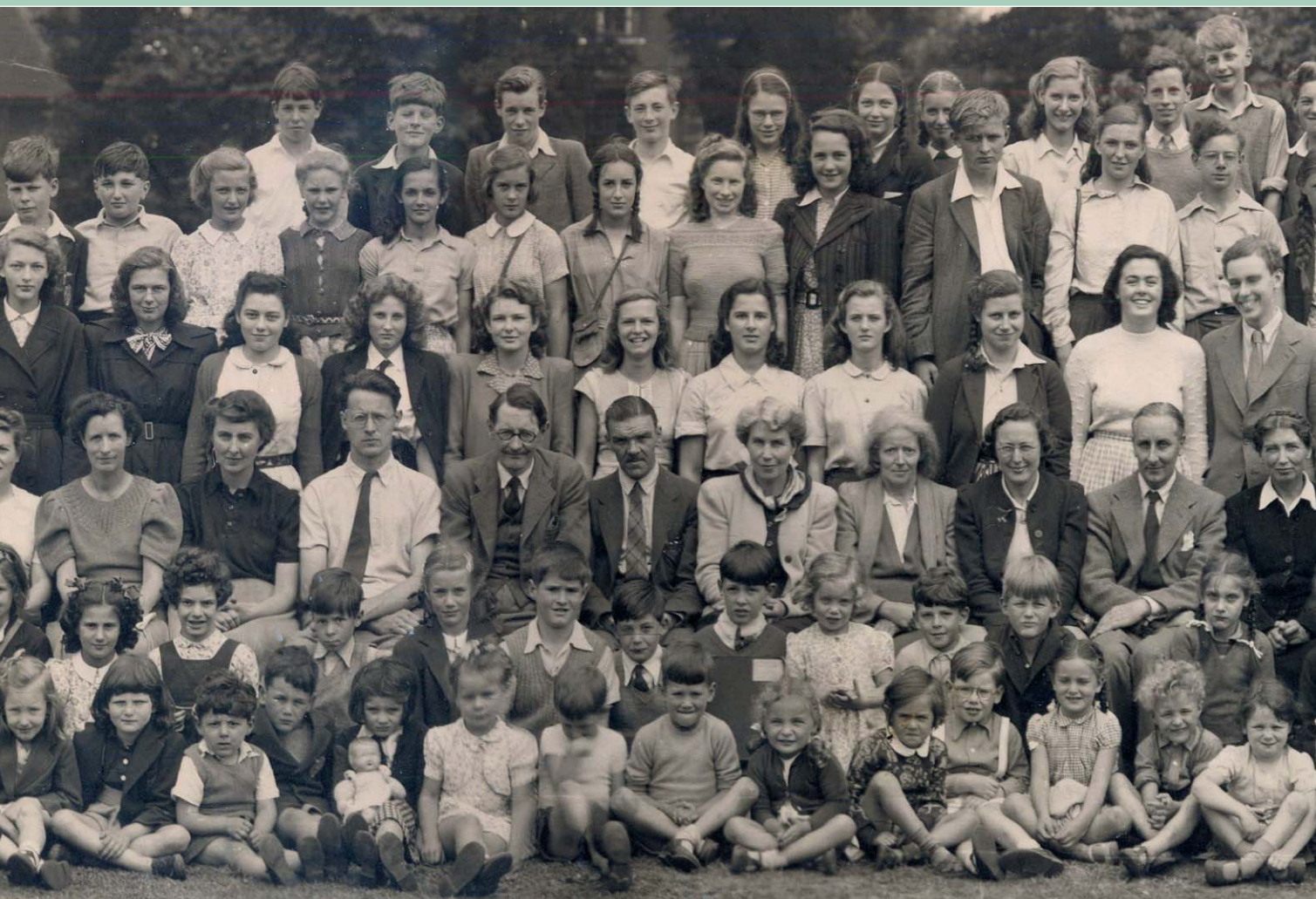
Apologies to all whose contributions do not appear. We have simply run out of space. I will try to make amends in the Autumn edition.
Peter Palliser

1947

Are you in the picture?

This is the 1947 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.





Rosalind's Memoir

From "Time Which Spaces Us Apart" by Rosalind Thornycroft, completed by Chloë Baynes (1991)

The time had now come, in 1899, to consider our schooling seriously. I was eight and Joan was eleven. Mother had become very interested in the new co-educational school of the King Alfred School Society, which was run by a council of parents with the headmaster working in consultation with them. It was to be non-religious and there were to be no exams, no prizes, no artificial inducements to work. Instead of imposed discipline the much harder lesson of self-discipline was to be inculcated. These ideas appealed very strongly to my mother, who felt she would rather send her daughters to such a school than to a conventional girls' high school. It was therefore decided that we should move to Hampstead where the school was....

Then one morning, each holding one of Uncle Oswald's hands and running to keep up with his energetic strides, we made for King Alfred's school at 24 Ellerdale Road. I remember the first day, my great shyness in answering questions from other children about myself. And I remember all the names at 'call-over': Dora Lowy, Ida Mullins, Margery Basden, Callord Kapteyn, Mary Swan, Claud Mullins, Estelle Basden, Joan Thornycroft, Owen Callard, Charles Voysey, Phyllis Hardwick, Wilma Hickson, Enid Wallis, H. Boulvin, Irene Sinkinson, Hilda Lowy, Eric Callard, Jack Mullins, Rosalind Thornycroft, Guy Garrod.

Soon, the move into our new house completed, we... began at One Oak a safe, consecutive and comfortable life which lasted for seven or eight years. So secure was it that my only doubt was that it might go on too long. In fact there was a vivid moment, perhaps the first vivid moment of introspection, when walking home from school and seating myself upon a public seat at Frognal, I thought to myself 'How long will it be at school? Heavens! Perhaps nine years'; a rift in the serenity of present life from moment to moment, a vision of the awfulness of Time and Death. Sometimes on my way to school there were exciting occasions when H. Boulvin, a Belgian school-mate with a peculiar guttural accent,



used to meet me in the churchyard, for he was officially my young man – a very surprising new idea to me.

At school I was interested and learned French songs and games, some Latin and some English songs taught to us by Cecil Sharp – on one occasion in person. 'I'll weave my love a garland' was in A minor, my still beloved key. And now I began music lessons properly with Mr Frood, a bald-headed gentleman with a beard. He had a strong love of classical music and a strict and pure attitude to the piano. I learned a Mozart Adagio in B minor in which the left hand crossed over at several points and played above the right. This was rather exciting.

King Alfred's had not been in existence for more than about a year when the headmaster Mr Rice quarrelled with the Society, notably with Mrs White Wallis, an important and fanatical member. The new headmaster, Mr John Russell, then started his long and successful term of office. He was a large imposing person with a tremendous pontifical style. He wore tweeds and a green silk tie in a silver ring and was much admired by all his pupils. With him came

Mr George Chester Earle, the most inspiring teacher of English and of woodwork; and indeed a combination of the two went on in the carpentry class. Keats and Shakespeare lines flew about with the wood shavings, and in his white carpenter's apron and flashing glasses he actively demonstrated the mystery of spirit and material made one.

Until the Boer War, my knowledge of politics was confined to the death of Queen

Victoria and a general belief in Mr Gladstone – general because, although I knew he was a politician, he did stand for homely virtues, particularly the biting of a mouthful of food thirty-two times and the drying of a sponge prior to packing it by wrapping it in a towel and stamping on it. And of course there was the Gladstone bag. Then came the Boer War and it was quite fun at school to wear small buttons showing photographs of the British generals. But my loyalty to my generals was seriously shaken when important girls such as Sylvia Dryhurst, Hester Radford and Ursula Cox all announced that they were pro-Boer. At 'call-over' it was the custom to sing a song in chorus and the song chosen by Mr Russell one day was The British Grenadiers. The pro-Boers were shocked at this jingoism and left the room as a protest. I followed them...

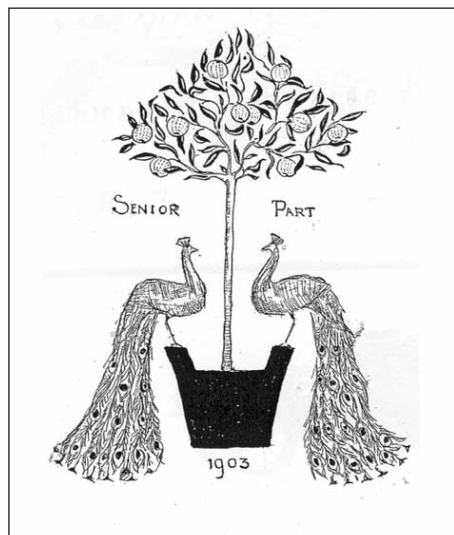
I started to enjoy drawing when I was nine. I commenced with horses and romantic knights in armour, and

I developed a trick for portraying the highlights on the shining steel which Father praised.... After the knights in armour came beautiful princesses on the model of Ford's illustrations to the Andrew Lang Fairy Books. I produced these in great numbers and always contributed an illustrated story to the school's magazine. Until now it had been decided that Joan was the artist, but now I decided that I was too....

In 1901 Joan and I were surprised to learn that Mother was going to have another baby. In September Elfrida was born and named so on account of the millennium of Alfred the Great and the completion of Father's statue at Winchester. She was also so named in memory of Mother's sister Elfrida who had died at the age of four. The household at One Oak now began to run at full power. Elfrida was to have a very special upbringing. Everything was to be very perfect and the child should suffer no physical risk or mental shock. At first she was not very strong, so Mother engaged a Norland nurse instead of an uneducated nannie (sic). The spare room became a superior nursery and Mother applied herself more deeply to educational

theory. There should never be a peremptory 'No' to a child; all questions should be answered carefully and the child told the reason for what it must do. In case of insubordination the device of diverting the child's attention was to be used. Nothing unpleasant should be seen or heard and fairy stories were heavily bowdlerised. No emotion should be shown by the parent, especially no emotion of displeasure, anger or irritation....

I enjoyed school very much, particularly the games of hockey and cricket. I had the proud position of wicket-keeper and could stand up close to the stumps for most of the bowling. But for our crack bowler, Voysey, I had to be a good long way from the wicket and was reinforced by a small stout person called Alan Thomas, who in later life became editor of *The Listener*. This was especially necessary because the school field, a very lovely one among the oaks and hawthorns beyond our house, had a steep slope to it. We took advantage of this by



picking Voysey to bowl down hill so as to get absolute hot speed and knock out all the big boys of University College School and, with particular pleasure, those snobby boys from Stallards who hated girls...

A weekly dancing class, to which our most intimate school friends came, was held at Mrs Rose's house and it was the high spot of our week. Mrs Rose, whose daughter Dolly later married brother Oliver, was a widow. She had lovely smooth fair hair and a cooing voice; and she created around her a very distinct soft gentle atmosphere of great charm, with deep chintz-covered sofa, silver bowls and cigarettes and quiet young men resting themselves in the soothing balm.

Very different was the Radford household, which was a centre of vitality and ideas. There were Saturday tea-parties followed by charades in which the witty brother Maitland took a leading part. His sisters, Hester, jolly and anecdotal; and Margaret, wild in ethereal fancies, were our

school friends, as I have said. ...

The Dryhursts, in Downshire Hill, were even more 'artistic' and lived in a very bohemian way – or so it seemed to us whose lives were so prosperous and comfortable. The impassioned Mrs Dryhurst, the hon. Secretary of the Nationalities and Subject Races Committee, was for ever giving help to some downtrodden nationality or almost lost cause. She was an atheist and anarchist. Her daughter Sylvia was by far the most intellectually aware of any of us. She had a caustic tongue, as Mr Earle complained, and a wit that left us gaping and delighted in our yokelly way. She had a faery Irish beauty and played Maeve in W.B. Yeats's *The Land of Heart's Desire*, which was produced at the school by the poet himself. It typified her whole position. Joan played Sean.

Morning started with Father waking Joan and me who slept in the same room.... We got down to breakfast at about 8.30... At nine o'clock we were told we must go off to school and so panic began. Five minutes past nine was absolutely the latest time to start if we were to get to 24 Ellerdale Road by 9.15 and not be late... In the evening [Father] got home at about 6.30, bringing with him a copy of *Punch* or *The Graphic*, or sometimes a pheasant, or in summer a bundle of asparagus. I was probably playing the piano at this time, having already done my serious practising. There was no homework at King Alfred's...

My drawing now became a much more



absorbing interest and ran very close with music. A new art master, Philip Jones, came to the school. He was a red-headed man from the Slade and he held the strongest convictions about good drawing, admiring in particular Ingres and Tonks. He showed us some Andrea del Sarto drawings in red chalk of babies' heads and put them up on the walls. These absolutely thrilled me with their reflected lights on bony structures. With his enthusiasm to help I really began to draw....

I was now sixteen and I seemed to myself grown up. I had been head girl at King Alfred's, but now on the grounds of my becoming too 'sandalily'..., I was sent to Priors Field, a very grand boarding school at Godalming, run by Mrs Huxley and Mrs Burton Brown....

At Priors Field I learned to tolerate the philistine world, so different from my King Alfred's self-righteousness. But it was not easy. At first I took the superior line of fiercely despising the school while at the same time actually enjoying it. And I made two very good friends in Marjorie Huxley

and Bridget Tallents. I really missed the freedom I had had at King Alfred's, and the chances of concerts and the more mature pleasures of London friends when I lived at home. So it was not long before I was able to persuade my mother to let me come back.



Deaths

Steven Charles Bruce Bullock (KAS

from 1949 to 1956 (?)), died peacefully on 27th March 2009, following a short illness. He was 72. Both Steven's parents, Bruce Bullock and Olive Rapson, were KAS pupils.



A private family funeral has taken place and there will be a Memorial Service in London on 15th June; details can be obtained from Heathfield Funeral Services, 01435 862648.

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

A full obituary will appear in the Autumn edition of *Alfredians*.

Sylvia Jill Hunt (née Russell), in France, on 15th March 2009, aged 79. Known as Jill at KAS, she taught Art from 1957 to 1965.

Antony Frederic Rapson, on 4th November 2008. He is survived by his three children and six grandchildren.

Stacey Tendeter – actress – 1949-2008. Stacey was at KAS in the early 1960s. She leaves her husband, Andy Elton, and her three children, Bronja, Matt and Seth and two lively grandchildren. A Memorial Tribute to Stacey Tendeter – her life and work – including movie excerpts and a showing of *Les Deux Anglaises et Le Continent*, directed by Francois Truffaut – will take place from 5.00pm on Saturday November 14th at BAFTA in Piccadilly. Anyone who would like to attend needs to e-mail Andy Elton at andy@patination.com, as space is limited. A fuller obituary will appear in the Autumn edition.

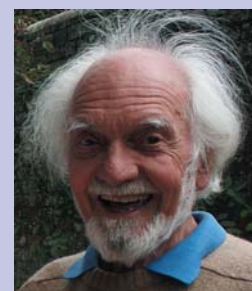
John Handford

– on 10 September 2008, aged 87. John was a teacher at KAS from 1951 to 1956. These two photos show him a few weeks before he died and around the time he was at KAS. His daughter, Karen, a pupil at KAS when John taught here, is standing beside him.



John Picknett

– on 27 March 2009. John was at Royston during the war, and when KAS returned to London, his family housed a very select bunch of pupils at their house in 1 Holford Road until more suitable accommodation could be found. (A fuller piece on John will appear in the Autumn Edition.)



Douglas James Henry D'Arcy, Born

London 1989, Died Isle of Arran 2009. Much loved by all who knew him.



(www.douglasdarcy.com)

Frances Stanley, née Daniels - May 2008 - KAS Teacher and Head of Special Needs. At the school from 1982 to 1994.

Register for Bone Marrow Donation – King Alfred School, June 2009

David Kovar (KAS 1988-2000) invites you to help:

"I am currently volunteering for the Anthony Nolan Trust (www.anthonynolan.org.uk). Every year thousands of children and adults with fatal bone marrow diseases, like leukaemia, reach a stage when their only hope of survival is a bone marrow transplant. Although family members, mainly siblings, may offer the best match, unfortunately 70% of patients do not have a suitable sibling match and are therefore reliant on an unrelated donor to offer them the chance of life.

Last year a close friend of mine, Henry, was diagnosed with leukaemia and was in desperate need of a bone marrow transplant. When the existing register did not produce a match, several of his friends and I organised a series of recruitment clinics to get people signed up to the register. One of these clinics

produced a match for Henry, who is now well on the way to a full recovery. To sign up to the register at one of these clinics is incredibly simple. All you have to do once you are there is fill out some paper work, spend a few minutes with a counsellor from the Anthony Nolan Trust, who talks you through what happens next and makes sure you understand everything, and then you have a simple blood test - that's it!

I am now organising another clinic for the Anthony Nolan Trust this time at KAS on the 30th of June. We are looking for anyone who is aged 18 – 40, in general good health and who weighs more than 8st with a BMI of less than 35.

I can tell you from first hand experience that these clinics really do save lives and spread awareness of a misunderstood disease as well as helping to correct the various misconceptions that surround bone marrow

donation. In the UK 1 in 3 people are diagnosed with cancer every year and these clinics offer a real opportunity to make a difference.

If you have any questions at all about the clinics or you want to be involved either by attending or by helping spread the work please feel free to contact me at davidkovar@hotmail.com. Thank you for taking the time to read this and I hope to see you at the clinic in June!"

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:

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