

# Alfredians



A newsletter for King Alfred School Alumni

Summer 2011

## Margaret Basden & Hetty Ethelberta Claremont

*Margaret Basden was one of King Alfred School's earliest pupils. Together with her sister Estelle, she was at the first school in Ellerdale Road from 1898 to 1904. At that time, there were only 30 to 40 pupils in the school. Margaret, known as Marjery, contributed regularly to the school magazine (stories, poems and paintings). Hetty Claremont was at KAS from 1906 to 1909.*

*The following is information provided by Margaret Ghilchik, who is writing a book, titled "The Fellowship of Women," chronicling the lives of the early women surgical Fellows of the Royal College of Surgeons and I am extremely grateful for her permission to publish the following text.*

### Hetty Ethelberta Claremont 1892-1924 FRCS 1920

It was an extraordinary thing that of these five early surgeons, two should have gone to the same school. Both Margaret Basden and Hetty Ethelberta Claremont were educated at King Alfred School in Hampstead, though Hetty was six years junior to Marjery and always looked particularly youthful. Hetty was a brilliant student, athletic, with wide interests, mountain climbing, walking, speaking several languages, the daughter of a J.P. and with many doctors in the family. She was practical with her hands, enjoying carpentry and gardening, as well as music. It was she who found the site in Manor Wood in North End Road where King Alfred School re-located from Ellerdale Road in Hampstead and played an active part in the move and building.

She qualified with the Conjoint Diploma in 1916 at the age of 24 and the University degree of MB BS the following year. She published a case-report on a case of mycosis fungoides in the Proceedings of the Royal Society of Medicine while still a medical student. She was intent on a surgical career and took and passed the FRCS in 1920 at the age of 27 and followed it with the MS in



Hetty Ethelberta Claremont

1922. She studied at the London School of Medicine for Women where the surgeon Mrs Scharlieb spoke highly of her intellect and her personal charm and her concern for the welfare of her patients, and also at St George's Hospital, in Hyde Park Square; again, it was war-time and the all-male medical schools were depleted of students and were therefore agreeable to receive some women students, and the tuition fees they brought with them. Although it was felt that leaving the Royal Free and going to St George's was at some risk to her career, she was keen to go in order to ensure that women students should be admitted to the London Teaching Hospitals. In her final degree MB BS, she was awarded the John Hunter Gold Medal.

She got good experience in house appointments and as surgical and anaesthetic registrar at St George's, as Curator of the Museum where Sir Humphry Rolleston thought highly of her, and where she filled the posts of Casualty Officer, and Clinical Assistant to the Venereal Diseases Department. She had two papers published in The Lancet, one on shortening post-

operative convalescence, a topic that retains its interest today, and one a case-report describing a patient where the pylorus had inverted and obstructed a gastrojejunostomy, giving an indication of the range of surgery that she was taking part in.

Then, using her languages, she travelled to study for a year at the University clinic in Zurich, and visited centres in Vienna, Budapest, Frankfurt, and then Madrid. On her return she was appointed surgical registrar to the National Temperance Hospital, Surgeon to the Bermondsey Medical Mission Hospital, and clinical assistant to the Outpatients at the South London Hospital for Women and Children and to the Female Lock Hospital for venereal disease in the Harrow Road, Paddington, and set up in private practice at 31 Devonshire Place as a consulting surgeon. She was appointed to her old school to carry out medical inspection of the children.

However, at the early age of 32, she contracted typhoid fever and perished. A great sadness to all who had known her. A broadcast was made through the London wireless station appealing for suitable blood donors that might save her but, though offers were received, none was of any avail.

### Margaret Mary Basden 1886-1974 FRCS 1919 MD 1920

Margaret Basden took and passed the Fellowship in 1919. She had been a medical student at the London School of Medicine for Women when the College of Surgeons had opened its doors to women and she lost no time in taking the first part of the FRCS, the Primary, in Anatomy and Physiology, as one could then, while still a student, after the 2nd MB, still being an undergraduate. She had been educated at King Alfred School in Hampstead where she was called Marjery.

She qualified with the London University MB BS in 1913 and took the MD, higher degree in medicine, a year later. Her skills were well regarded as she went on to house surgeon posts at the London Hospital, **(continued on page 3)**

# The Spirit of Dance

Lindsay Lloyd (Salter) Nichols writes to us from Russell, New Zealand

**K**AS has been on my mind recently. I haven't been back to the UK for nearly 15 years. Time flies, but recently I have been thinking about writing more reminiscences about my school days. For the present, I just recall:

The morning timetable was devoted to academic subjects (after callover either in Squirrel Hall or in the Main Hall, followed by a few physical jerks, we fetched our books from our form room and made our way to the room of our first lesson for one of the following subjects: English, French, Latin, Geography, History, Maths, Science (Physics, Chemistry, Biology) and 'Private Work.' During 'private work,' we worked on our own on the 'Stages' set in these subjects (stages replaced homework, which was not encouraged until school cert year).

The afternoons were devoted to arts and crafts of our choice and to games such as hockey (mixed, boys and girls) and netball or football in winter, and in summer cricket (mixed). There was also tennis and fives played during breaks or after school.

I understand that an important principle of the Dalton system of KAS education was the balance between academics and the arts, that the arts not only balanced but also energized academic learning.

The arts included art (drawing, painting, modelling in clay), drama (Elizabeth Jenkins, the English teacher, produced a Shakespeare play every year in the 'covered court', which of course no longer exists, having been built in), orchestra taken



by Mrs Boulter in the Hall, singing with Mrs Martin Shaw, wife of the composer and collector of English folk songs (then in danger of being lost due to the Industrial Revolution) – and Dancing!

There were five kinds of dancing you could choose from: Greek dancing which was a 'free' sort of dancing, similar to Isadora Duncan's dancing and based on the positions of dancers depicted on ancient Greek pottery. This was taught by Peggy van Praagh (later Dame Peggy – OBE in recognition of her life's work in ballet). Peggy also taught tap dancing and ballroom (which was a popular pastime during breaks). There was also country dancing and Dalcroze eurythmics. I did all these except eurythmics.

Peggy, as well as being trained in these various kinds of dance, was a trained ballet dancer and at that time was dancing at the Mercury Theatre with the Ballet Rambert. Inevitably our 'Greek' Class went to see Peggy dance and became 'sold' on ballet. KAS was not too keen on us learning ballet, as they considered it went against their principle of 'free expression.' This attitude resulted from the fact that the techniques of ballet had been formulated into a system of certain exercises, positions and movements, which, incidentally, are anatomically scientific in developing bodily strength and flexibility and speed and, if wisely (not fanatically) taught and practised, guard against physical damage, while also teaching body awareness and the importance of healthy posture.

Peggy, who had been educated at KAS, brought the school's non-fanatical, relaxed, learning for the sake of it and free expression to her teaching of dance and – to ballet.

Ballet taught me how to apply the self-discipline encouraged at KAS to a discipline I was keen to learn. (I use the word 'discipline' as another word for some form of learning.) And discipline in the sense of focused energy is of course essential in any form of learning. There is one school of thought which believes this focus or discipline can be gained by force and/or fear, competition, prizes and punishments; and the other by encouraging human beings' natural inclination for learning – their curiosity and adventurousness – in a relaxed and fearless atmosphere: perhaps this is the difference between learning and indoctrination.

I have always enjoyed dancing, as did my parents. My father gave me my first dancing lessons in what he called 'stage dancing' (something like Fred Astaire's).



Dancing with Peggy was my chief joy. It was always fun. At 16, when I left KAS, I wanted to be a dancer – and that meant at that time ballet. I went to Sadlers Wells School connected with Sadlers Wells Ballet Company in Sadlers Wells Theatre (after the war to become the Royal Ballet at Covent Garden).

I felt at home in a theatre, particularly one where both ballet and opera were taught, produced, rehearsed and performed as they were at Sadlers Wells. But the first shock was that our morning class of classical ballet was without music – no pianist – only the thumping of the teacher's stick on the floor as she instructed us and counted, dance divorced from music! Unlike Peggy's relaxed fun teaching of ballet, it was fanatical. The director, Ninette de Valois, was the daughter of an army officer and she was prejudiced against any new fangled ideas like 'free expression.' Her end of year report on me was I had no talent. The experience put me off dancing for some years, which happened to coincide with the war, marriage and four babies.

When we emigrated to New Zealand and my daughters learnt ballet, I joined in and trained in Auckland (with Russell Kerr amongst others) until I was 50 and came to Russell 40 years ago. For a while I taught ballet here in Russell. But I was not comfortable with the way I was expected to teach by the Ballet organization here and evolved my own methods of dancing, my own 'Dance-Exercise' for children and adults, based on a mixture of Greek, ballet, aerobics (taught at the time by one of my daughters) and yoga.

The philosophy and practice of yoga I learnt out of a book by an Indian swami during the war when I was 20\* and working as a secretary in the Ministry of Food evacuated to North Wales. I have been practising yoga ever since, the last 35 years as a teacher, studying further with other teachers, my method of teaching influenced by the self-discipline and free-

expression of KAS, combined with ballet and the spirit of dance, the ancient art/science of India – yoga – melding with my European culture of dance.

Last year, at the age of 91, I joined an amateur ballet class in Russell, taught by an ex-Los Angeles dancer trained by one of Diaghilev's 'baby ballerinas' when she grew older. I had not done ballet for many years, although during that time I had danced with an amateur group of 'free' dancers in Russell and in Auckland and, of course, had regularly practised and taught yoga.

At these recent ballet classes, I realized just how valuable are the techniques of ballet, particularly those performed at the barre, in building strength, flexibility, coordination, body awareness and control and healthy posture; these exercises had become embodied in me to sustain me for a lifetime.

I am grateful to KAS for setting me on this path, so that in my nineties I am still enjoying using my body to dance, practise and teach yoga, as well as walking, swimming, sailing, etc., and as well as having written three books with another two in the making.

I am not forgetting the value of competitive sports, which I also enjoyed in the relaxed fun spirit of KAS: hockey, cricket, etc. But I believe these masculine games can be enhanced by the complementary enjoyment of using the body in more feminine, less aggressive, but equally empowering ways through the many forms of dancing.

With love and best wishes,

\*One of the gifts of KAS education was that it taught you to teach yourself.

## Margaret Basden & Hetty Ethelberta Claremont

### **Continued from front cover...**

serving under Sir Hugh Rigby and Dr Russell Andrews, impressed by the teaching and kindness of Russell Howard, availing herself of all the opportunities offered for surgical training under these renowned figures at a time when the War was wreaking its effect on the staffing of the great London teaching hospitals. She took the FRCS in 1919 and was appointed to the staff of the Bethnal Green Hospital and to the Mothers' Hospital in Clapton in the East End, and the Mildmay Mission Hospital and the South London Hospital for Women and Children. She worked all her life.

Having benefited in the First World War by the enhanced opportunities for surgical experience, she repaid this by a doughty contribution in the 2nd World War. In charge of the Clapton Maternity Hospital, in the thickly populated East End of London, a hospital abandoned by the EMS (Emergency Medical Service) after the first three months of the War as a non-general Hospital unsuitable to receive casualties, she was left as the sole consultant with her former colleagues deputed away to other services, and she took up residence in the hospital with the trainee medical officers, staying throughout the bombing-raids – sometimes as many as eight in a night – transferring the hundred patients and their babies (who were deposited on to a shelf over the bunk of each mother) in to the underground shelter throughout the air-raids. By her organizational skills, she and the night shift nurses and midwives could achieve the whole transfer in seven minutes. It was still the days of a lying-in period of ten days post-

partum. Her report in the British Medical Journal makes the penetrating observation that the early ambulation required of the patients to transfer to the air-raid shelter had the beneficial effect of less morbidity, better involution of the uterus, a marked reduction in deep vein thrombosis, and generally improved morale and strength of patients. The practice finds resonance today with the domino effect when most patients after childbirth are not only ambulant but going home the same or first day after giving birth. She voiced a small concern that such early mobilisation might later increase the incidence of prolapse.

She enjoyed being busy at her work and found retirement at age 65 in 1951 difficult so she took herself off to the Mengo Hospital in Kampala, Uganda, where she continued to offer her surgical expertise. She lived to a good age, 88. Her compassion and sense of responsibility was illustrated by her personally travelling to America to bring back a Czech lady who had once worked in her household and who was terminally ill. It was said in her family that an ancestor had attended the King, George III, in his illness, the malady depicted by Alan Bennett in *The Madness of King George*. With her stately appearance and dignified carriage and formal apparel of an earlier age, her deep contralto voice and chuckle as she recounted humorous anecdotes, she would have been a match for any such illustrious forebear.

*I have not been able to find a photo of Margaret Basden. If anyone can help and send me one, I shall publish it in the Autumn edition – Ed*

## A word...

...from the Editor

To all who have e-mail

We are trying to build a more accurate email database. This is not only to save on paper and postage, but also to find a way to reach you faster and more easily. Should you have an email address, therefore, I would be very grateful if you would send me a quick email to [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk). Please do so, even if you think I have it already.

Many thanks.  
Peter Palliser.

## The 1970s Reunion Group Meets Again



**Reunion Dinner:** Back row (L to R): Daniel Kossoff, Daniel Albert, Sebastian Cody, Howard Martin Treacher and Kim Franklin. Middle row (L to R): Marina Summerfield, Liz Yates, Nick Clunies-Ross, Simon Lane and Bhupat Thaker. Seated are: Hazel Summerfield, Lucy Jones and Dany Clunies-Ross



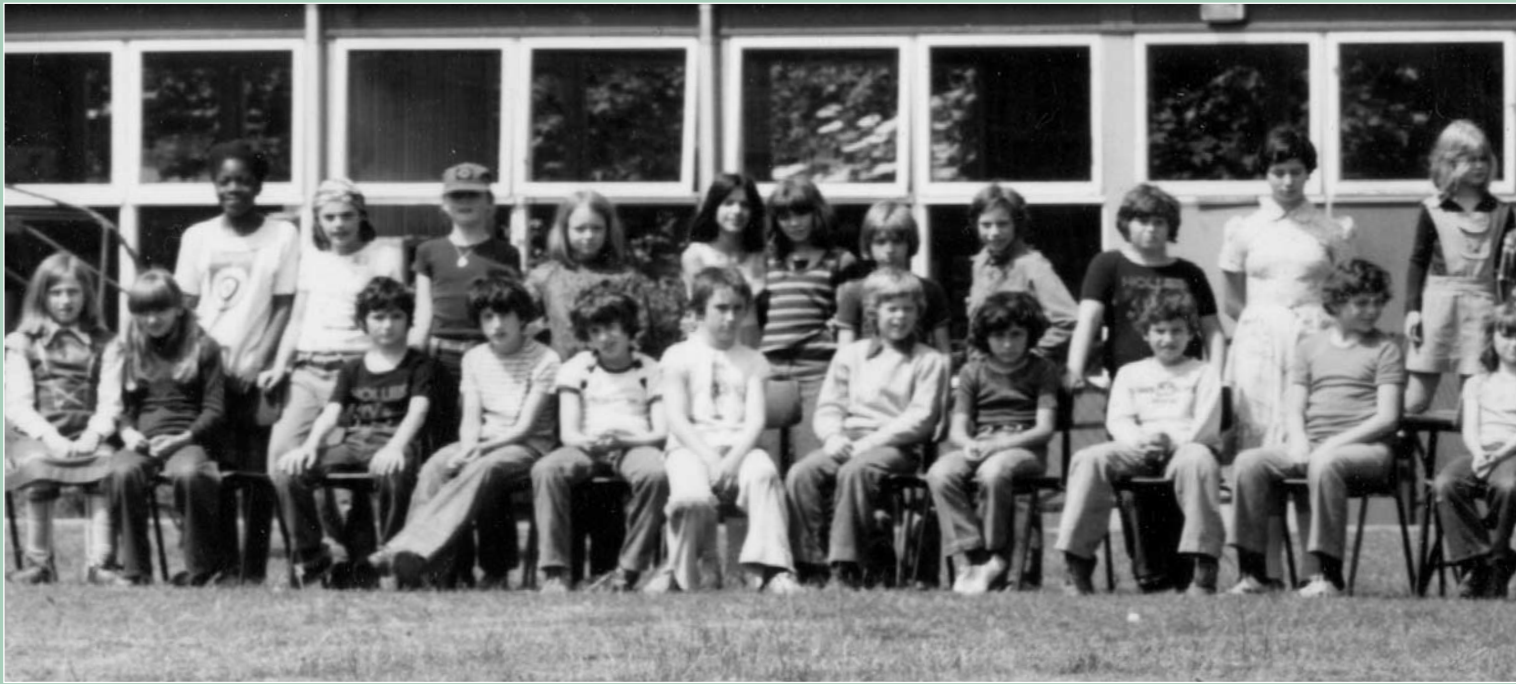
# 1977

*Pages 4-5 Upper School  
Pages 6-7 Lower School*

Are you in the photo?  
We'd love to hear from you.  
Please drop us a line.









# Obituaries...

## Cecil Lush

KAS Parent 1958 -78, Council Member 1962 – 80, KAS Architect 1962 – 89, KAS Friend

The founders of King Alfred School believed, correctly, that the complete success of the School would depend upon the devotion of parents. For more than half a century no-one has shown greater devotion to the high educational aims of KAS and no-one has worked harder to make them a reality than Cecil Lush, who has recently died aged 92.

For many years Cecil and Dolly Lush, parents of Peter and Ian, were loyal and constant supporters of a wide variety of activities and functions in the school, showing the kind of commitment and enthusiasm that gives encouragement to both pupils and staff. As the School Architect, Cecil was responsible for many improvements to the buildings and grounds, (usually on a budget too small to allow him to do as much as he wished).

The Art/Science Building was a major project and an essential requirement for development of the school at that time. Completed at the end of the 1960s using the latest building techniques, it accommodated every need for the modern teaching of



science. (The integrity of its lines has been somewhat disrupted by a modern upward extension.)

At the beginning of the 1970s the school achieved successful expansion through the erection of 'temporary' Terrapin buildings in the Lower School (lower family group/year3 and music room/ staff room/woodwork) and Upper School (Green Building – the first version). These structures, planned to last 10 years, were made to last more than 30 years with careful maintenance.

Perhaps the work that best epitomises Cecil's love for KAS involved replacing the original Squirrel Hall, which had become dangerous, with the structure which we know today. On a number of Friday afternoon choice periods Cecil, with some staff and senior pupils, collected a large number of used telegraph poles. At weekends, with additional parent and pupil power, poles

were planted four feet deep in hand mixed concrete and other poles were lifted into position as roof supports, a feat of engineering which even today would be difficult to emulate. Over the several years, many people contributed to the building of Squirrel Hall, but it would not have been completed without Cecil's sustained enthusiasm, determination and organising ability. In this respect, he was able to draw on his years of experience in the Army; in the war he had served with the Royal Engineers in France and Belgium, and subsequently in India and Burma, during which time he rose from being a simple private taking orders to being a major in charge of 6 officers and 250 men.

At KAS, for many years in all weathers, he ensured that pupils and parents could cross North End Road in safety, controlling traffic on the hill, reminding parents to park correctly and dealing very firmly with motorists whose selfishness was a danger to others.

The spirit of KAS is never better than when parents, pupils and members of staff are working together for the benefit of the whole school. These projects usually depend on the insight and initiative of a few individuals who can inspire and encourage others to join them. Fortunately the school that has such parents as Cecil, in every generation, who make extraordinary efforts to demonstrate their faith.

● Brian Rance 2011, freely adapted from an appreciation of Cecil by Roy Greenfield 1989

## Memories of Cecil Lush

My first contact with Cecil was in my first year at KAS in 1974 when a man I didn't know walked into my lesson and asked if everything was alright in the lab. Not knowing who I was talking to I suggested that the architect, whoever he was, had made a mistake not having any eye-level windows in the lab. He was very patient with me, explaining that the windows were at the request of the science teachers and not the decision of the architect. As I got to know more about the school I discovered that this was, of course, the way things were done at KAS. Cecil later explained the design of the building to me and how it minimised the use of materials and the cost. It is a very clever building. Despite this less-than-fortunate first meeting, Cecil was always friendly and I came to appreciate his familiarity with and knowledge of KAS and its history. After he retired he would come to the AGM, Open Days and occasional events and I always enjoyed talking to him.

● John Peisley

The image that comes to mind when Cecil's name is mentioned is of him laughing, sharing a joke in the middle of a group of people touring the grounds and buildings.

I never knew Cecil as a parent of one of my pupils. His younger son Ian, a very talented musician was already in the Sixth Form when I arrived at KAS. However, Cecil always included and welcomed the newest members of the KAS community. Perhaps the school was smaller then, but it did feel like a community without hierarchy and people like Cecil, Roy Greenfield and Gordon Davies helped to create that atmosphere.

Cecil epitomised the best tradition of hard working parents who are prepared to give so much of their professional skills and their free time to improve the facilities of the school for future generations. The current generation can enjoy what was built by parents like Cecil, who continued to work for us long after his sons had left. His interest in the school was not centred on his own children.



At Cecil's funeral, Roy recalled the weekend working parties when Cecil, who had gone out on the Friday to obtain lorry loads of telegraph poles, organised a crew of teachers, parents and pupils to erect squirrel hall with muscle power, ropes and pulleys. I am sure there was lots of laughing there too. It was to become the place for so many meetings, cake sales, a place to play in all weathers, a great barbecue site. The day after Cecil's funeral something strange happened. One corner of squirrel hall began to collapse and it had to be cordoned off. Was this a co-incidence or had squirrel hall decided it did not want to outlive Cecil?

● Rita Murray

# Richard Adeney

25 January 1920 – 16 December 2010

Richard Adeney was one of the finest flute players of the twentieth century. In a long and distinguished orchestral career he was first flute in the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra and the English Chamber Orchestra, and appeared as a freelancer with many others. As a chamber musician he was a founder member of the Melos Ensemble, and he was a popular soloist and recording artist.

Richard Adeney was born into a family of artists. His father, Bernard Adeney, had a short-lived marriage with his fellow artist Thérèse Lessore. When this marriage ended he introduced her to his friend Walter Sickert, who married her. Richard's mother, Noël, was an artist and textile designer. 'I was named after that crackpot, the painter known early on as Walter Sickert, but later preferring to be called by his second name, Richard,' he wrote.

He attended a prep school in St. John's Wood, an experience he described in his memoirs as 'six years of hell', before being sent to King Alfred's School, which he said was '...a civilised school in north London, where I still managed to avoid being educated, but did learn how to make recorder-like instruments out of bamboo.' At King Alfred's he became obsessed with tuning his little instruments and trying to make them sound sweet. 'The usual tensions of family life and worries about growing up disappeared when I played – at last I'd

found something I could do well.'

Adeney took up the 'proper' flute at Bryanston School in Dorset and later studied at the Royal College of Music. When the Second World War broke out he applied for and, to his surprise, received conscientious objector status, which left him free to pursue a playing career.

His earliest recordings were made on 78 RPM discs, and he participated in countless recordings on LPs, as a member of orchestras and chamber ensembles and as a soloist. His recording with the Melos Ensemble of Debussy's *Sonate* for flute, viola and harp and Ravel's *Introduction and Allegro* remains for many the favourite performance of these works. Adeney recorded the four Mozart flute quartets; the Mozart concertos (including the one for flute and harp); the *Brandenburg Concertos* (a number of times); and many other works, including the two flute concertos written for him by his good friend Malcolm Arnold. Adeney was hugely admired by his colleagues, many of whom said he could lift an entire orchestra's performance by the beauty of his playing. He was also a brilliant photographer whose



Photo by Robert Taylor www.taylorphoto.co.uk

pictures can be seen in André Previn's book *Orchestra*.

Richard Adeney described his career in an entertaining and occasionally scandalous autobiography, *Flute*, published in 2009.

● Robert Bigio

## Remembering Richard Adeney

I only knew Richard Adeney for a mere 25 years. I say mere because, as his executor, during the process of informing lots of his friends of his death I've had some wonderful conversations with people who have known him for up to nearly 70 years – and these were real and lasting connections. Across the great range of people I spoke to there was so much love and respect expressed for him, together with some very funny stories, often related to his very particular ways of communicating and conducting himself. He was a delightful and unique man with a charming modesty. He will be much missed!

I met Richard after he had more or less

retired from professional flute playing. We would occasionally attend concerts at Wigmore Hall together, but he was far too modest to talk about his musical achievements or dwell on the past, so our first relaxed shared interest was photography. I was just starting out at the time and was a bit in awe of him and his photographic achievements (and his very impressive equipment). He'd taken advantage of some great opportunities to create many fine portraits of his fellow musicians, many of which are featured in his fascinating and occasionally outrageous autobiography *FLUTE*. It is less well known that he was also a fine travel and social

In typically generous fashion, very early in our friendship he turned over his purpose-built darkroom to me to use as my own. This was a fantastic break for me at a time when resources and opportunities were short. Eventually when the room had to be used for other things he generously gave me all the equipment in it, on the condition that he could come along once a year to use 'my' newly built darkroom to print the image for his Christmas card.

Richard was a delightful, unique man. His charming modesty, warmth, directness and notably inventive generosity will be much missed.

● Robert Taylor

# Christopher Kellerman – 1944-2011

By some of his KAS friends

Our friend Chris passed away last January after a brief and intense battle with brain cancer. Chris' life was imbued with so much energy, purpose and connection with his professional and personal world that his death has in no way diminished our sense of his presence, influence and the value his friendship offered us over so many years. We have known him continuously since his KAS days, with some intervening years missed during his years in the USA and then his early professional years in the City of London. After resuming connection with Chris and his wife Julia, their home in Hampstead Garden Suburb (HGS) became a focal point for many reunions, including the very special 1994 50th birthday reunion attended by most of our

classmates, and by the now legendary KAS English teacher and mentor to so many, Margaret Maxwell. He had contributed in tracing all our class members, including those then living in far off lands, and hosted the event. The joy of that occasion certainly equalled the long and unremitting effort put in by Chris with classmate Charles Posner to bring this to fruition. This special effort was typical of Chris as a friend and as a professional. He would quietly accomplish the essentials with minimal fanfare.

In his article in the *Alfredian* (Oct 2010), Chris wrote tellingly about our common years at KAS (the Monty years) and alluded to the outward failures of his own education before leaving KAS. You would not have predicted that this was the same person who would be Director of the HGS Trust for 20 years, a significant position he held with distinction and selfless devotion to an important mission,

his work admired by many throughout the wider community. On several occasions, walking across Hampstead Heath with Chris, an encounter with a neighbour would elicit a brief very focused exchange about some aspect of the Suburb's conservation, or we would pass a house with a particular history to relate. He had a quick grasp of facts, came to the point quickly with a view to reaching a helpful and practical resolution of any problem. There was a mutual respect in all his relations deriving from his personal modesty and a quiet confidence in the value of what he was doing.

Chris blended his work and life seamlessly in a rich and harmonious balance of concern with his environment, politics, arts, sports, education and much else. While he was tactful and discerning in professional or public arenas, he had strong opinions about everything, and vigorous discussion among

## Blood Brothers

– From Charles Posner

I first met Chris when I entered nursery school at KAS in 1949. We soon realised that we shared something that we found both intriguing and of great significance. Amazingly, so we thought, we were both born on the very same date, 27 June 1944. At odd moments throughout our 12 years together at school we would return to this subject, marvelling at such a coincidence considering the number of possible dates that we each could have been born on. In later life I read an article on statistical probabilities which attempted to explain that for even a small group (our class always seemed to number exactly 21) a coincidence like this was not as unlikely as it appeared to us. I must admit that I didn't really understand the argument and I, like Chris, never ceased to wonder.

Sometime around our eighth birthday, I remember that Chris and I were standing under the old oak tree in the open air theatre, discussing a story that Cynthia had been reading to us about a young boy of European descent and a native American boy of a similar age. They had become such good friends that they had decided to seal their friendship by re-enacting an old tribal custom: cutting their wrists with a hunting knife and allowing their blood to mix. By doing so they would become blood brothers. Chris said that we should do this too, and for the same reason. I searched my pockets and found a small penknife.

Somewhat nervously we started to make a tiny cut in each others' wrists with the blunt blade, eventually penetrating our skin deeply enough to draw (a very small amount of) blood which we duly mixed.

Chris and I saw little of each other over the years so I was surprised to receive a call from him during Christmas 1993. He announced that our 50th birthday was looming and that such a signal event should be marked by nothing less than a class party to be held on a date as close to our birthday as possible. I gradually warmed to the idea – it was impossible not to become infected by Chris' boundless enthusiasm. I must confess to reacting somewhat pessimistically, wondering as I did whether it would be possible to hold such an event at all. After all, I asserted, it would be impossible to find everyone (some of us lived overseas and others had not been heard from for years). Probably, I added, only four or five of our fellow classmates would turn up on the day. Chris was having none of this and said that holding such an event would help us get through this critical date in our lives.

We divided up the work between us and managed to find the addresses of every single one of our school friends. And so, on a sunny afternoon at the end of June 1994 in Chris and Julia's garden we held our class reunion, and what an

event it was. All but two of our classmates joined us for the celebration and we spoke to them on the phone. Two had flown in from distant lands to be with us and we even had two of our favourite teachers there. I said at the time that this day was one of the most significant days of my life. Only Chris, with his optimistic nature and natural friendliness could have had the vision and the persistence to make it happen.

It was easy to see how devoted Chris was to Julia and his son Otto. Both my sons and Otto were present on that day and took care of the barbecue. How sad that only a few short years later we each lost a son in tragic circumstances.

Julia kindly asked me to visit Chris just a few days before the end. She realised how important it was for me to see him one last time. She understood how he and I found significance in sharing the same birth date, of being blood brothers. His passing for me is therefore of particular poignancy, and I will miss him greatly. Now he has gone from us, and we all mourn him.



**Class – 1958. Standing (L to R):** Rosemary Green, Dorothy Woolf, Phylis Pitt, Michele Kimche, Denese Weatherall, Patricia Lane, Ruth Jacobs, Jenny Gordon, John Mason, Peter Steinberger, Ralph Steinberger, Anthony Lawson, Christopher Kellerman, David Rose. **Sitting (L to R):** Jane Robins, Charlotte Beresford, Malcom Manwaring (Form English Teacher), Nicky Isaacs, Anton Smith, Jonathan Epstein, Charles Posner



friends was not complete without raised voices ("no,no,no, no,no..."). His views were staunchly rational, and particularly in politics humanity prevailed over partisanship.

We have many personal memories to cherish. First, Chris' extraordinary enthusiasm and his bellowing laugh. He gained so much pleasure from his interest in all that was around him and the people he met. He had no patience for anything pretentious. At one Wigmore Hall concert, one of his favourite pianists entered with a hint of affected self-importance; one glance at Chris was enough

– it was hard not to double up. We enjoyed his exceptional memory for details from the past – whether to laugh recalling 2nd form eating competitions at KAS lunch or school pranks described in his article. Ulf Ehrenmark recalls coming to KAS as a vulnerable teenager from a Swedish Boarding school that was later closed down due to the abuse that went on. Chris was the one who took him on as a 'buddy' from day 1, made him feel 'safe' and made his three years at KAS totally enjoyable. Their friendship continued in later years with Chris providing invaluable advice and support in dealings with the HGS and their mutual interest in classic cars. Chris was an avid and competitive tennis player ever since matches in the mid-fifties on the public courts in Hendon Park, close to where we were brought up. In hundreds of tennis sets played, the one outstanding feature of his play was his forehand drive, hit unerringly with a minimum of backswing but with great force. Many years later, he paired with Derek Cheek as a team at the KAS Centennial Open Day against the school's top two players; modesty would forbid him giving the result. Bridge, cycling, football (Saturday night TV) also got serious attention.

Chris showed keen observation and deep sensitivity in friendships, expressed in offering help exactly where it was needed or remembering significant events even about

our parents. He reminded Anton Smith about his father admonishing a chauffeur on a school trip for the fact that he was endangering his young passengers' lives and those of other road users with his reckless driving. He offered invaluable support over several years to Nick and Naomi Isaacs's mother in her later life. His concern and competence came naturally, but we also connect it in particular with the patience and love he and Julia showed in caring for their son Otto during many years of poor health. They were deeply shaken by Otto's accidental death but we were all struck by how remarkably they sustained each other and their own lives and relationships while never forgetting. During his own last months, Chris uncharacteristically spoke more openly of his personal feelings – how he and Julia "fell in love immediately", of our 55 years of friendship, the irony of how his healthy lifestyle was ending, the miracle and perhaps consolation of Beethoven's last string quartets and Bach's cantatas.

We will always gratefully remember Chris as the most vital, caring, honest, irreverent, ready-for-a-laugh, savvy and engaged of friends, one of our and surely many others' great benefactors.

● Derek Cheek, Ulf Ehrenmark, Naomi Isaacs, Nicholas Isaacs, Anton Smith

## Reg Corbett

Reg started working at KAS in October 1988 as a part-time Lower School woodwork teacher. He worked with us for ten years and left in April 1998. He'd already retired from his previous profession and, still full of energy, wanted to try something new.

He quickly became more than a woodwork teacher in the eyes of staff and children alike. More counsellor, guide, friend, father/grandfather figure and general dispenser of wisdom.

Reg always seemed to wear a smile, not of forced bonhomie but of genuine love of life – and life (or a large part of it) for him, was people.

When plans for phase one of the L/S rebuilding plan (Yr. 6 classes and library) was mooted Reg was invaluable. He joined the committee and brought all his civil engineering expertise as well as his understanding of how to get your voice heard in a large committee. Commanding respect from all the professionals he quickly became the representative voice of L/S staff.

As far as the staff was concerned the days Reg worked became somehow separated in people's mind from the rest of the week.

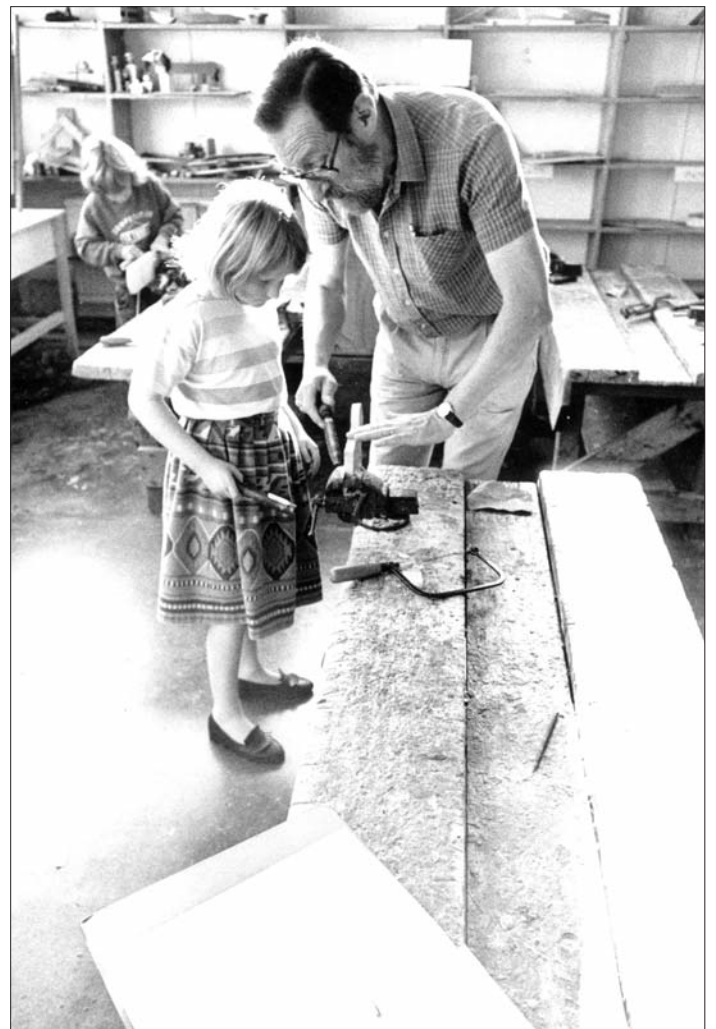
Want something made for your drama production? – Talk to Reg.  
Problems with family? – Talk to Reg.

Want to hear a wonderful anecdote about life as an evacuee for your World War 2 project? – Talk to Reg.

New member of staff and want some advice about settling in? – Talk to Reg.

Ask the staff who shared time with him and the same words keep occurring - Big hearted, caring, kind, selfless, great with children, a natural teacher – and lots and lots of fun!!

● Mike Young





## DOROTHY KOTHARI

Dear Friends,

You very kindly sent my mother Dorothy Kothari some beautiful flowers for her 91st birthday last month. I have been going through some old photographs and thought you would be interested in these photographs which were taken in the nursery school at KAS.

I am guessing that they are from the mid 1950s.

In KAS2, Dorothy is the second from the left on the slide. The third from the left is someone many Old Alfredians will remember – Marion Robey. She was known as Robey at school and was in charge of the nursery for many years. I believe that the person on the far right is another teacher, Peggy Sanford.

In KAS3, Robey, Dorothy and Peggy appear with an unknown guest. He may have been an Indian friend of my family.

In KAS4 I do not recognise the other women, but I think they are also nursery teachers.

Best wishes, Raj Kothari.



## GRACE DAVIDSON

Dear Editor,

On seeing a notice in a Highgate shop window that OA Grace Davidson (1983-94), would be the featured soprano with the Highgate Choral Society in a concert at St Michael's Church, I determined to attend. I had enjoyed hearing her sing at school concerts during her time at KAS. And what a pleasure it was to hear her beautifully developed high soprano voice. The programme notes told of her recordings and many engagements here

and abroad including a debut at the Royal Albert Hall in Mahler's Symphony 8. Clearly she is becoming a high flyer which other OA's would be delighted to know about.

Of course, I found her parents in the audience – father Ian, the comedy writer who had been a very helpful KAS Council Member, and mother Anthea, who told me she is often busy as a grandmother looking after Grace's two young children. Sister Hannah, the 'rebel' who chose South Hampstead High rather than KAS and is now a BBC producer was also in the

audience.

Older sister Clemency (also an OA) with her two children lives in Brighton where she works as a social worker.

KAS involvement in the concert extended to the chorus with KAS Council Member, Fiona Hackett, singing in the alto section. Her children Rory and Miriam are recent school leavers.

Areta Hautman

*Grace's website is [gracedavidsonsonoprano.com](http://gracedavidsonsonoprano.com) – Ed.*

## Diary



### 2011

#### Open Day

25th June, 12:30-3:30pm  
Reception 4-6pm

#### Bonfire Night

5th November, 5:30-8.00pm  
Reception 6:30-7:30pm

## Another word...

### ...from the Editor

**A**pologies to Michael Mann, Carol-Anne Turner and Batsheva Steinbeck for not publishing your letters. I have run out of space. These will be published in the Autumn edition.

● Peter Palliser

Alfredians Summer 2011. 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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