

# OBITUARIES

## Michael W Alcock

**Born 25 September 1932**

**Died 8 December 2023 - Aged 91**

**At Bedford School 1943-1950 – Ashburnham**

Following Bedford, Michael went to Reading University to read Physics where he met Anne Brewer and they married in 1957.

His working life was spent in nuclear physics, initially at Aldermaston, and then at Culham. He was a keen sportsman who played football, cricket and table tennis for many years and was still playing badminton into his 70s.

On retirement Michael and Anne spent much of their time in France, initially in the Alps and later in the Loire Valley.

Sadly, Anne died in 2018 and Michael is survived by two sons, Graham and Alan, three grandchildren and three great grandchildren.



## Neville M Andrews

**Born October 1933**

**Died 9 December 2023 - Aged 90**

**Bedford School Staff 1958-1968**

Neville (Nev) was born in Wallasey. He attended Wallasey Grammar School where he was the Captain of Boats. He then did two years of National Service, where he studied Russian with the Intelligence Corps. In 1954 he went up to Clare

College, Cambridge to read history. He was Captain of Boats and spare man for the 1957 University boat race crew.

After a year of teacher training at the Perse School in Cambridge he achieved his Certificate of Education.

In 1958 he arrived at Bedford School to teach history. He relates that on arrival, as he approached the Masters' Common Room, he was met by Commander Tom Smith who was limping (a war injury sustained in the South Atlantic in 1942), next came Peter Sewell, a music teacher who had a congenital clubfoot, closely followed by Jack Carlton who had lost a leg during the war when he was run over by one of our own tanks! Finally, out limped Murray Fletcher who had recently sustained a rugby injury. I suspect Dad wondered if you had to be disabled to join the staff!

All the staff seemed to have nicknames, including "Spanner" Lee (we're going to have to tighten things up around here), "Thickie" Fletcher; Osram (Michael Barlen); "Ganger" Foster; Wee-Mac; Cossack (Mr Cummings); Icky; the Beeve; PROW; "Pussy" Marchant; "Cuddly Dudley" (Galbraith); Brake-Blocks, Shoeshine and lifelong friend Jim Davidson, who was sometimes known as Tiger or Drabbers. Nev became known as "Peasant" or just "Pez".

He taught English, History, Geography and RE, and later Russian. He recalls his monthly salary was £38 and one of his first pupils was Paddy Ashdown (52-59), later leader of the Liberal Democrat Party. Dad threw himself into life at the school, coaching rugby to the 3rd and 4th XV, playing cricket for the Ousels and coaching rowing to Ed B (the U16

2nd VIII). After a year he became house tutor at Pemberley, where he said he particularly enjoyed producing the house plays. He became involved in the CCF, where his National Service commission was transferred to CCF Captain. He recalls camps in the Mill Hill depot, Eskdale and Cornwall and Arduous Training in the Lake District and Priddy, Somerset, where Jim Davidson, Peter Guthrie and Dad had some interesting scrapes, not to be recounted here! In 1964 he became the 1st VIII coach and in 1965 the VIII had some success when the self-proclaimed "Great Eight", stroked by John Beresford (59-64), son of the great Jack (1913-17), won the senior Vllls at Bedford regatta in a course record time.

He was a founder member of the Star Rowing Club in Bedford, and subsequently captain and president.

Dad later said that his time teaching at Bedford School was the most enjoyable of his teaching career, but towards the late 1960s, he became increasingly frustrated by his lack of promotion in the history department and the perceived nepotism in the appointments. In addition, the lack of success of the VIII at Henley led to friction with celebrity parents and senior Old Bedfordians, so when he was offered a position as head of history at his alma mater and the opportunity to be closer to his dying father and support his mother, he took it.

He went on to teach history, Russian and economics at Wallasey Grammar School and Market Harborough Upper School, before taking a post as headmaster at Baines Grammar School in Poulton-le-Fylde and then as headmaster of Evesham High School.

He retired from teaching in 1992 but continued to work as a volunteer at Tewkesbury volunteer bureau where he became the volunteer organiser.

Apart from rowing his interests included mountaineering, skiing and playing the piano and piano accordion.

**Sam Andrews**



## Nigel G Barker

**Born 25 January 1959**

**Died 19 November 2023 - Aged 64**

**At Bedford School**

**1967-1977 - St Cuthbert's**

Nigel was born in Bedford, son of Dennis N Barker and Jennifer (Axtell), the eldest of 3 brothers who attended Bedford School, Simon (68-79) and Jeremy (70-80).

He went to the National College of Agricultural Engineering at Silsoe to study computing and software. He then went to ADP in Luton, a computer bureau from 1982-1988 before having a number of jobs in software systems, including an oil exploration company and a telecoms company before getting contract jobs in the banking world between 1989 - 2001, for banks such as Solomon Brothers, Banque Paribas, MFI, and Goldman Sachs.

He joined Euronext Liffe in 2001 as a support analyst, developing their futures and options trading systems and UBS in 2006, supporting a computerised DMA (direct market access) equities trading system. After a brief time with FKI Logistex in Cranfield Beds, supporting a computerised management system, Nigel joined Invar Systems Limited in 2009 in Milton Keynes as a Project Manager.

Nigel married Angela Hulme in 1986 in Stockport and they have 2 daughters.



**Peter Brichta (aka Peter Brett)**

**Born 6 June 1929**

**Died 14 July 2023 - Aged 94**

**At Bedford School**

**1942-1945 – Burnaby**

Peter came to England as a refugee from Vienna a few months before the outbreak of WWII. He was taken to live at Hedenham Hall in Norfolk with his guardian, Miss Joyce Carr, and attended

Bungay Grammar School before coming to Bedford.

Peter started his acting career with a scholarship to RADA, but prior to that, he was already performing on the West End stage as a dancer in musicals like *Oklahoma*, in revue with Kenneth Williams, and in films such as *Invitation to the Dance* with stars like Gene Kelly. As an actor, he worked with Ken Russell, playing Elgar in the well-known BBC Monitor profile, and also wrote the screenplay for Russell's first film, *French Dressing*. His name can be found in the credits of many popular TV series of the '60s and '70s, but he is probably best known nowadays for his appearance as 'Brian' in *Fawlty Towers* – *The Hotel Inspector*.

As a writer, Peter wrote extensively for stage and screen but came to novel writing fairly late in the day. He started writing *The Elena Emotion* at a house near Granada in 2007, and much of the plot of that novel takes place in the beautiful landscape of Andalucia. *Game in a Spider's Web* also has a number of scenes which take place in Southern Spain, but the main story happens in and around Hay-on-Wye. One reader described the novel as a "passionate story of landscape, place, people, time and love... skilfully weaving the past with the present, mythology with the supernatural to create an intricate web of intrigue."

*Walking Blues*, based on Peter's screenplay of the same name, is a short novel set in Norfolk where Peter spent some of his childhood and has autobiographical echoes. His autobiography, *In a Language Not My Own*, gives a more detailed account of this childhood: how he arrived as a refugee from Vienna in 1939, how he adapted to life in a big country house, how he survived and even enjoyed life at Bedford School, and gradually from there found his way into the theatre, first as a dancer, then an actor, director, and writer.

Peter is survived by his wife, writer Margie Douglas, his son, musician and teacher Paul Brett, and daughter, dancer, choreographer, and teacher Jessie Brett.



**W A E 'Bill' Canvin**

**Born 16 August 1945**

**Died 1 June 2023 - Aged 77**

**At Bedford School**

**1954-1961 - Ashburnham**

Bill was born in Northampton, England, and was the youngest of five siblings. He always had an adventurous streak, which took him to the gold mines of South

Africa right after graduation, then later to Canada with his wife Rosemary, young daughter Helen, and of course Noggin, the first in a line of treasured family dogs.

Bill continued the adventures and opened one of the first

neighbourhood pubs in the province with Rosemary and John and Maureen Foster. From 1977 to 1980, they owned The Witch of Endor Neighbourhood Pub in Maple Ridge (now Witchcraft), and then The Frog and Nightgown in Coquitlam from 1984 to 2004.

British Columbia held a special place in Bill's heart. He cherished spending time with his family, camping in many beautiful provincial parks. They started with a tent and eventually upgraded to a tent trailer, though parking it wasn't always a smooth ride—Helen's ears often had to be covered for that part. Bill had a true love for the outdoors and would often take long walks with his dogs on the trails and dykes nearby. Then in later years, he created the most amazing outdoor spaces and garden at home.

He loved spending time with his family and friends. A great host, he warmly welcomed many, showcasing his knowledge of local history and earning himself the nickname of 'the walking encyclopaedia'. Over the years, friends were all fortunate to spend time together at a family 'cabin' and in his beautiful home base in Maple Ridge.

He was absolutely devoted to his family. Rosemary, his wife of 55 years, their daughter Helen, son-in-law Mark, and grandchildren Ryan and Jenna will forever cherish Bill's memory and everything he gave and taught them. He will also be dearly missed by his sister, Mary, brother Richard (51-58) and his wife Hazel, sister-in-law Celia and her husband Les, and numerous nieces and nephews in the UK and Australia.



**Andrew J Clark**

**Born 21 January 1932**

**Died 30 January 2023 -**

**Aged 91**

**At Bedford School**

**1942-1950 - Bromham**

**Alan M Coates**

**Born 2 April 1926**

**Died 7 April 2023 - Aged 97**

**At Bedford School 1939-1944 – Crescent**

Alan joined the Navy on leaving School and went up to Brasenose College, Oxford in 1947 to read Philosophy, Politics and Economics. In 1951 he passed the Final Examination of the Law Society, and obtained an honorary distinction in the Examination for admission to the Roll of Solicitors of the Supreme Court.

He married Elieen Francis Tapster in 1955. They had a son in 1959, and a daughter in 1961



**John P Crofts**

**Born 2 June 1959**

**Died 20 June 2024 - Aged 65**

**Bedford School Staff 1981-2004**

John was born in Sale, near Manchester, to parents Peter and Barbara and grew up in the beautiful town of Marple, just outside Stockport. He attended Manchester Grammar School and

went on to read French and Politics at Hull University, during which time he had stints living abroad, and experienced his first foray into work, with such illustrious jobs as a bin man at a

marina in southern France, and later a packer at a salt factory in Hamburg!

On graduating university, John took up a teaching post at Bedford Prep School, a place he would end up staying, with great happiness and fulfilment, for almost 25 years. During his time at Bedford, he was variously a French teacher, Latin teacher, Head of MFL, boarding housemaster, and ultimately Deputy Head.

He married Bridget Dearmer (Kemp), mother of Chris Dearmer (94-04) in 1994 who later worked in the music department at Bedford and sang with the Eagle Choir. Beyond the school, which was undoubtedly a central focus of his life, John was also a proud resident of Bedford, supporting the local rugby club, enjoying the annual River Festival, and spending many happy years as a member of the uncharacteristically youthful Bedford Park Rotary Club, providing a rare social network outside of the school walls. It was through this Rotary Club that John first discovered the beauty of the north Norfolk coast, on a club holiday to Briarfields in Titchwell.

And so it was, when the headship of Glebe House School came up in 2004, John leapt at the opportunity and took up post in January 2005. John and Bridget became the beating heart of this wonderful seaside school.

After retirement as Headmaster in 2018 John became Director of Development at Glebe House and continued as a volunteer in the school and in a standard week, he could be found reading with the Prep School, supporting sports development across the school, leading the Rota Kids Club School and supporting staff. He was also a School Governor and trustee of various schools.

Retirement also brought the onset of many exciting new opportunities and the promise of fun and adventure, with John and Bridget embracing their newfound freedom by renovating their beautiful cottage in Ringstead and taking an extended holiday to visit family in Canada. This should have been the beginning of a long, happy and richly deserved retirement together. But then came the devastating blow when Bridget passed away so suddenly and unexpectedly in November 2019, barely more than a year into this next stage of their lives.

John spent the last few years living life to the fullest, with education still forming a major focus, but one which now involved voluntary work. He continued as church warden of St Andrew's Ringstead, renewed his membership of Rotary, and was elected a Lib Dem County Councillor for Freebridge Lynn in 2023. He met Karina Hart in 2022 who became an important part of his life, and they were enjoying travelling together. It is cruel that their time together has been cut so short.

John died unexpectedly whilst on a school trip with Glebe House to the Hadrian's Wall area in Cumbria. He is survived by his three stepchildren, Tessa, Ben and Chris and four grandchildren.



### **Richard J Cundall**

**Born 14 April 1951**

**Died 9 July 2024 - Aged 73**

**At Bedford School**

**1964-1969 – Redburn**

Richard was a Chartered Surveyor and practised in Ludlow, Shropshire with Ancaster LLP. He married Alison Harris in 1978 and they had three daughters and a son.

Richard was very much involved with the cultural and social life of Ludlow and wanted to preserve the historical heritage of the town and in particular the repair of the town wall that had collapsed more than a decade before. He was the trustee of various charities including the Hall Garth Charitable Settlement, the Town Walls Trust and The Flounders Folly Trust.

### **Colin H B Day**

**Born 19 June 1934**

**Died 30 December 2021 - Aged 87**

**At Bedford School 1943-1952 - Talbot's**

Colin was an Export Director for Russell Hobbs until he set up Marlborough Associates in 1979. This was an independent specialist organisation providing a confidential service to shareholders and owners of private companies, as well as quoted PLCs, involved in the acquisition or disposal of businesses in the manufacturing, service and commercial sectors with a value of one to twenty million pounds sterling.

### **Roger T Eddleston**

**Born 25 July 1949**

**Died 1 November 2022 - Aged 73**

**At Bedford School 1963-1967 - Paulo Pontine**

Roger went to Churchill College, Cambridge and gained a first in Mathematics. He later passed his actuarial exams. He spent much of his working life in the City, in London, working in stockbroking firms.

His particular passions were playing golf and bridge. He died following a short illness. He is survived by his wife and his two children.

### **Henry L Ensor**

**Born 3 July 1932**

**Died 17 January 2024 - Aged 91**

**At Bedford School 1945-1951 - Paulo Pontine**

**Son of Eric L Ensor (1901-1905).**

### **Col Donald N Faithfull-Davies**

**Born 12 September 1944**

**Died 6 May 2022 - Aged 77**

**At Bedford School 1958-1963 – Pemberley**

Donald went to St Catherine's College, Cambridge and read Natural Sciences, followed in 1971 by a BM and BChir, and an MSc from London. He became a Consultant Microbiologist for the Ministry of Defence (Army) and was based at Aldershot Hospital. He was a Colonel in the Royal Army Medical Corps.

Donald was a keen cross-country runner and even as dementia took hold he would still escape for a run and somehow always find his way home! He is survived by his wife, Carrie and daughter Major General Lizzie Faithfull-Davies CBE



### **Richard Faulkner**

**Born 28 May 1952**

**Died 27 October 2023 - Aged 71**

**At Bedford School**

**1963-1969 - Ashburnham**

Richard passed away peacefully on the 27th October 2023, following a short illness. He is survived by his wife Jill and three children.



### **Peter C Firmin**

**Born 24 August 1934**

**Died 24 April 2024 - Aged 89**

**At Bedford School**

**1945-1951 - Crescent**

Peter was born in Shefford and lived in Meppershall for his formative years. The family were regular church-goers and by the age of 10, Peter was a server,

starting bell ringing shortly afterwards.

He excelled at his first school and won a maths scholarship to attend Bedford School, joining Crescent house in 1945, immediately being moved up a year. Each day, he would get the school bus into Bedford, rain, snow or shine. On the same bus was a lad who became his best friend, Roger Newis (41-50), who sadly died in 1994.

His skills at maths and science were only matched by his prowess on the school sports field, particularly rugby, which became a lifelong passion. He also enjoyed football, cricket and Fives.

At the age of 17, Roger told him that a group from Clifton church were planning to go on a walking and youth hostelling holiday in the Derbyshire Dales but there were four girls and only three boys and would Peter like to join them to make up the numbers? Peter joined them on their trip. One of those young ladies on the trip caught his eye – and he caught her eye too – and shortly after that, Jennifer and Peter started courting, marrying at Clifton church in 1955. Baby Timothy was welcomed in 1961, followed by Anne in 1964.

On leaving school, Peter went to work in Barclays Bank, in the Overseas and Dominions Office, with a view to working abroad but had to leave to do his National Service, in the Intelligence Corps, spending time in Cyprus, Tripoli and Suez. On his return, he started work as a statistician at the National Institute of Agricultural Engineering at Wrest Park, then followed by a year or two at Jordans Mill near Sandy.

Peter then went to work in sales with a small company in Flitwick which was taken over and eventually became Tricentrol. He climbed the ranks of the commercial arm of this oil exploration company and loved his work. He thrived and became managing director, expanding and developing the business to become the largest of its kind in England.

During this life, he continued his love of rugby and became an East Midlands Referee, when his playing days were over. After every international rugby match, he would pick up the phone to his friend Bob Main, a loyal Scot and well-known Bedford GP, to celebrate or commiserate depending upon the results. He loved his visits to Twickenham.

In 1982, changes were afoot, and Peter bought a wholesale gardening business, based in Ilminster and the family moved to Somerset. He loved the challenges of the new venture and built up the business to be the main player in the southwest.

Nearing retirement and having moved to Curry Rivel, Peter spent a few years working for Business Link, helping new and young businesses to develop, putting his vast and successful business experience to good use. He also volunteered for the Prince's Trust.

During this time Peter also returned to enjoying bell ringing and became a member of the PCC. He continued to be a member of the PCC after another house move and was still

responsible for Gift Aid records until the day of his passing – those early maths skills were put to good use again! In 2017, Peter returned to Bedford School for one last visit, delighted that the chapel had barely changed since leaving, seeing his old masters' names on the panelling and recalling the night of the great fire that destroyed the Great Hall. Although the science labs had changed a bit over the intervening years, he remembered the technician's nickname of "Cyanide Sid" and how the boys played endless pranks on the poor man.

Peter's passion for sport, for good food and travel, for his family and for reading the Daily Telegraph from cover to cover each day, hid a deep and important faith, something he rarely mentioned. He always supported the church, giving his time, wisdom and experience right until the end. But it got him through some difficult times and was there for him in times of joy. His wisdom and clever wit gained him respect and dignity over the years. He was always concise and to the point, without being rude, a skill he attributed to his schooldays. He never said 10 words where 2 or 3 would do but was always willing to offer help and guidance in any situation or on any matter. He was a man of firm convictions, and he had great integrity and expected the same from other people.

Peter is survived by his wife, Jennifer, son Timothy and daughter Anne, three grandchildren and a great granddaughter.



### **Lt-Col John Garton Jones MBE**

**Born 19 September 1930**

**Died 18 October 2022 - Aged 92**

**At Bedford School**

**1939-1949 - Crescent**

John was born in Dehra Dun, India to W J Jones Esq, Assistant Supervisor, East India Railway and Mrs N V Jones. After leaving Bedford John went to Eaton Hall

OCS, and was then granted a National Service commission in The Royal Norfolk Regiment in 1950 and posted to The Jamaica Battalion in Jamaica.

He was promoted to Lieutenant in 1952 and converted to a Regular Commission in The Royal Norfolk Regiment and posted to Depot R Norfolk. While there he was awarded the M.B.E. "in recognition of gallantry in connection with the East Coast Floods of February 1953" consequently acquiring the nickname 'Sandbag Jones'. Very high winds and an exceptionally high tide had acted together to drive the sea through the sea defences and break riverbanks. John was a training platoon commander, and he took a lorry and some men to King's Lynn to help where possible. Frantic efforts were being made to fill sandbags and to use them to prevent the River Ouse from breaking its banks and a major operation had also been mounted to rescue people in serious danger in their homes and take them to safety. John's group reported to the police, and they were guided to where the floods were rapidly rising and where it could not use a vehicle, the men waded and swam to bring people out safely. A number of old people had sadly already drowned. The group spent most of the night helping to rescue people. Over the next few days other parties of soldiers were sent to help in different areas, sandbagging sections of the bank of the River Yare, helping to build up the sea wall and working on the sea defences near Southend. The emergency continued for two and a half weeks.

John served as Motor Transport Officer (MTO) for the 1st Royal Norfolks in Colchester from May 1954 - October 1955, and moved with the Battalion to Cyprus during the Cyprus Emergency confronting the EOKA, becoming 2nd in Command of B Company there and at Iserlohn in 1956-57. He was promoted Captain in 1957. In December 1957 he was posted as Staff Captain Q Ops in HQ 2nd Infantry Division in Hilden, near Düsseldorf for a year and returned to 1st R Norfolk and on into 1/1st E Anglian in Berlin.

John married firstly Mary and later Anne and had 3 children, William, Edwina and Charlie

In January 1960 he was posted as Staff Captain Q(Qtg) in HQ British Forces Aden Peninsular (which later became HQ Middle East Command) and from December 1962-65 he was Adjutant of 4th R Norfolk (TA) at Norwich. From 1965/66 he was Military Intelligence Officer at Kuching in Sarawak during the Indonesian Confrontation. He commanded A Coy 4th R Anglian in 1967-69 in Malta, Libya and Gillingham. He then served as DAAG (Secondment Policy) in the MOD, and Regimental Recruiting Officer R Anglian at Bassingbourn.

At School John was a good boxer and, as a junior at School, he won all his fights and the Anderson Shield for the best junior boxer. As a senior he and Peter Hoppe (39-48) were considered the 2 best boxers and they had to train together as no one else was prepared to do so. John was selected as Head of the Gym Club and Captain of boxing at School, as well as a member of the 1st XV and 1st XI and Head of House. However, John had to give up boxing following a bad case of concussion. Peter Hoppe went on to become Army Boxing Champion at his weight and lost to Henry Cooper in the ABA Championships. John became a qualified Army Boxing Referee and Judge and trained his Regimental Boxing Team, but never boxed again. A good hockey player, John also played cricket for the Army (Malta) in 1967 and 1968.

He was promoted Lt Col in June 1973 and appointed General Staff Officer (Int) HQ Northern Ireland from May 1973 to 1975. He was Assistant Adjutant and Quarter Master General at HQ Wales from 1975 to 1977, and CRLS Wales from 1977 to 1980, and HQ Western District as a Special List Lt Col from 1980 to 1982.

John retired from the Regular Army in October 1982, whereafter he used the surname Garton Jones. He spent two years as Bursar of the Outbound Wales, and then RO3 in HQ Queens Division for one year and then RO2 in HQ Western District in Shrewsbury. He spent 10 years as Vice Chairman of two Lloyds Names Defence Group and in 2008 established a Group in Shropshire of The Philosophical Society of England.



**Peter W G George**

**Born 22 July 1930**  
**Died 19 November 2023 -**  
**Aged 93**

**At Bedford School**  
**1940-1949 – Ashburnham**

As a native of Bedford, Peter attended school as a day boy, following in the footsteps of his older brother by nine years,

Dennis (32-39). National Service comprised two years in the Royal Artillery including deployment to the British Army of the Rhine. There followed a three-year association with the

Territorial Army whilst completing A' Levels and commencing a degree in Chemistry at Southampton University, graduating in 1955.

Whilst in Southampton, he almost immediately met his future wife, Patricia Glasspool (Pat) but returned to Bedford to work for Laporte Titanium Ltd (in Luton) as a research chemist engaged with pilot-scale work in the production of titanium compounds. Peter and Pat married in 1956 and spent their early married life in Bedford until moving back to the Southampton area in 1959 where Peter took up a management position at Mullard (part of Philips) involved with transistors, semiconductors and integrated circuits.

Peter and Pat had 2 children, Michael and Sally, and Peter eventually transferred his skills from the factory into higher education, qualifying to become a lecturer in Works Management at Southampton College of Technology (now Southampton Solent University) in 1971. A local home move took place in 1969, to Ashurst on the edge of the New Forest, where Peter and Pat were to live for the next 52 years.

Peter was a keen and proficient small-bore rifle shooter (prone), shooting for Hampshire and remaining an active participant into his eighties, also running the Southampton Colleges Rifle Club for many years. Rugby Union was his armchair sporting passion, and he would use every opportunity to watch The Blues at Goldington Road on return visits to his mother in Bedford. Peter also loved gardening and became almost self-sufficient in fruit and veg from a large garden and allotment.

After retiring aged 61, Peter became a grandfather to Martin, Hannah and Victoria and, with Pat, enjoyed many happy years discovering the world, Southampton Docks often being a handy starting point in later years. Peter was blessed with good health and remained fit, active and independent beyond his 90th birthday.

Following a stroke, and the passing of Pat, after 65 years of marriage, he spent his final two years in a nursing home close to his daughter, where he was a lively and popular resident.



**D Charles Goror**

**Born 20 July 1936**  
**Died 16 September 2024 -**  
**Aged 88**

**At Bedford School**  
**1947-1950 - Sanderson's**

A change in family fortunes meant Charles' time at Bedford School was cut short in the Removes but he remained for ever grateful for the early lessons

in self-reliance and always thought of himself as a Bedfordian. In particular, he retained fond memories of Farrar's where Mr and Mrs Sutcliffe were truly in loco parentis to a motherless small boy.

Age 16 Charles left home, lived alone in London and worked at the Royal Exchange Assurance head offices, opposite the Bank of England. There, he reported daily to The Court (as its Board of Directors was known) presenting documents for signature and operating the corporate seal, while a butler served sherry and dry biscuits to the great men (no women!). 'Pure Forsyte Saga' he said. But he thrived there and was very happy: club rugby; appearing with The Royal

◀ Exchange Players in their productions at the Fortune Theatre, Drury Lane and receiving an education into the work and culture of a great commercial institution. (To his delight, thirty years later, Charles was invited by former colleagues, now much promoted, to lunch at the Royal Exchange - a butler in attendance!).

National Service followed: basic training in the Royal Artillery, then Mons OCS (commissioned into the Royal Army Service Corps, not the Gunners, due to his inadequate maths). Later, after passing the Regular Commissions Board, Charles served in Hong Kong in the 'Army's navy' and was promoted to Captain, at age twenty-three. Next, he commanded the C-in-C NORTHAG's mobile war HQ in Germany (including deployment during the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962), followed by two years instructing at the Joint Services School for Nuclear, Biological & Chemical Warfare. After attending the Staff College in 1967, Charles was promoted to Major. Subsequently, two staff appointments were punctuated by command of 12 Squadron RCT in its centenary year. Age thirty-seven and recommended for promotion to Lieutenant-Colonel, Charles resigned his commission to seek a business career.

He was invited to start a security company. In time this became part of P&O - whose activities now reached far beyond shipping - and The London Silver Vaults and The Chancery Lane Deposit Company were added to his widening responsibilities.

In 1987 he left P&O to form Charles Gorer & Associates which, for thirteen years, successfully analysed risks from terrorism and serious crime, and devised countermeasures, of behalf of major clients. These included the V & A; British Coal (whose large manual workforce was paid weekly in cash - millions of pounds to be distributed safely); Historic Royal Palaces (membership of the design team for the Crown Jewels' new home within the Tower of London, also risk analyses at Hampton Court and Kensington Palaces) and the Home Office - which commissioned Charles to investigate the UK safe deposit industry and recommend measures for its future governance.

In retirement Charles hoped his love and ownership of a classic wooden sailing yacht, combined with his membership of The Royal Cruising Club, would bring fulfilment but a bad fall and spinal injury made that impossible. Instead, he was active within a small Scottish community - serving on its council and as its secretary and as a trustee of a local charity. Accompanied by his Labrador, Grace, Charles drove a campervan 11,000 miles across Europe - including crossing the Arctic Circle.

In 2014, Charles was reunited with his first great love, met when each of them was young and carefree in Hong Kong. Now widowed, part paralysed and confined to a bed, an interval of 50 years was no great obstacle to them, and Charles became her principal carer until her death in 2018. Thereafter, he rejoiced in the companionship of her children.

#### *To My Beloved*

*Your final journey has begun*

*But yet you stay within my sight.*

*You turn to see who comes behind,*

*The footsteps which you hear are mine.*

Charles continued to live in Suffolk - active within his local parish church and pursuing his long-held ambition to be a poet. Four anthologies followed: *Amidst a Crowd of Stars*; *Exit Left*; *Learning to Say Goodbye* and *Of Thee We Sing*.

Annie Wallace, whose own long partnership had just ended when they met, became his much-loved companion.

#### **Philip M Gorton**

**Born 24 November 1929**

**Died 3 November 2022 - Aged 92**

**At Bedford School 1940-1946 - Ashburnham**

Philip was born in Liverpool, the son of Reverend John Percival Page Gorton and Muriel Gladys (Murray). He married Rosalind Angela Mary Neville in 1954 in Norwich and they had 3 sons and one daughter.

#### **A J Michael Grant**

**Born 27 February 1933**

**Died 19 October 2023 - Aged 90**

**At Bedford School 1942-1951 - Glanrafon**



#### **Robert J Gray**

**Born 22 May 1935**

**Died 22 September 2024 - Aged 89**

**At Bedford School 1946-1952 - Crescent**

Robert James (Bob) Gray, was born in the village of Arlesey, Bedfordshire, and at school developed his love for sport,

particularly cricket. He did his National Service with the RAF, mainly in Germany, and on returning to civvies spent the rest of his working life in insurance.

Having played several times for the 1st XI, Bob subsequently went on to play cricket for Henlow Park and, within a short time of joining, became Captain of a very successful team for 28 years. He was also on the committee for raising funds for the East Beds Charity. His personal sporting achievements were playing cricket for Bedfordshire, managing the youth team, being a qualified umpire and being on the selection board for Bedfordshire County Cricket.

Bob married Joyce Beryl Long on 1st April 1967 in Henlow Parish Church and for the first four years after marrying they lived and worked in London before moving back to Shefford, Bedfordshire.

After Bob stopped playing cricket, his competitive spirit was still strong so he joined Bedford Borough Indoor Bowls Club and then Henlow Park Bowls Club, where he was Captain for several years, and also Treasurer, until a shoulder injury forced him to step down.

Bob retired in 1995 but unfortunately was diagnosed with heart failure just before the Covid pandemic. His health then gradually deteriorated but he stayed at home being cared for by Joyce until he had to go into Bedford Hospital where he passed away on 22nd September 2024. He is survived by his wife Joyce, his sister Marion and her family.

Bob was a great friend to so many over the years and will be sorely missed. He had a good innings!

**Colin Simco (48-55)**



### **The Revd Nathaniel (Neil) B Hall**

**Born 21 April 1931**

**Died 22 June 2024 - Aged 93**

**At Bedford School**

**1944-1950 - Paulo Pontine**

After attending Bedford School, Neil did his two years of National Service with the Royal Signals before going up to Oxford to read History at St. Edmund's

College. Whilst in Oxford, he met Rosalie Chalk, who was reading English at St. Anne's College. It was whilst he was at Oxford that he felt the call to the Christian ministry. He stayed in Oxford to read Theology at Regent's Park College before marrying Rosalie in 1957 and then started his local church ministry in Bletchley (St. Andrew's Baptist Church), Coventry (Quinton Park Baptist) and Reading (Abbey Baptist).

In 1980 he became the Baptist Superintendent (a form of Baptist bishop) for the West Midlands, working with 200 churches and hundreds of church leaders until his retirement in 1994. He and Rosalie responded to three separate calls to serve the church in Nepal in 1994. They retired from these roles about four years later but remained active in church and community life in Hereford (their chosen retirement location) for many years after that. Neil took a very active role in the Watkins Court community in Hereford and after Rosalie's passing in 2018, this amazing, friendly community continued to provide fantastic support, and he was even more active within it.

In later years he enjoyed seeing all of his family many times and extended his sporting and musical interests considerably. He was an avid listener to BBC Radio 3 and loved attending concerts. He was very keen on rugby union, rowing and snooker. In his younger years he enjoyed rowing (1<sup>st</sup> VIII) and playing rugby at university and elsewhere.

Neil died peacefully, having said to his children that he believed it was his time. He loved God and people. He is survived by four children, eight grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren.



### **Derek A Hammond**

**Born 30 June 1934**

**Died 21 June 2022 - Aged 87**

**At Bedford School**

**1943-1951 - Crescent**

Derek was born in Bedford. His parents moved to The Croft, Stagsden Road, Bromham, shortly afterwards, where Derek lived for the remainder of his

life. He attended the village primary school and then Bedford School.

Following National Service with the RAF, Derek qualified as a Chartered Civil Engineer and spent all of his working life with the Highways Department of the then Bedfordshire County Council. He was very proud of his membership of the Institution of Civil Engineers and regularly attended their meetings. Following retirement he remained in regular contact with his former work colleagues, often returning to County Hall to meet them for Friday lunch.

Derek was a keen campanologist. He was taught to ring

bells in the early 1960s and he was a dedicated bell ringer from then on. He was Tower Captain at Bromham from 1973 for a number of years and a stalwart and Honorary Life Member of the Bedfordshire Association of Church Bell Ringers. He served twice as Association President (1985-1989, and 1998-2003) and also the Bedford District in various capacities including Chairman and Ringing Master at different times.

Derek was very honoured to be elected Association President and took the role seriously, making a determined effort to be present at every meeting of all three Districts (Bedford, Biggleswade and Luton), a considerable undertaking. He was also an excellent Chair for any meeting. He was always very supportive and encouraging to learners, and over the years he taught a significant number of people to ring.

In 2005, Derek was a willing member of an entirely volunteer team when the back six bells at Bromham were rehung and the frame painted by district members.

Beyond the tower, Derek enjoyed playing the organ for services at Bromham, mainly evensong, and at District and Association meetings. Derek last rang (with assistance) on Christmas Day 2019 after which, despite his determination, it became all too difficult.

Derek will be remembered for his meticulous organisation of the Bromham outings, in later years taking great pleasure in hiring and chauffeuring the local authority Flitter bus; and in the 1970s and 80s he organised a number of Bedford District barn dances to raise funds for the BRF. Few could compete with Derek dancing the Gay Gordons or Stripping the Willow, and he was unusually intolerant of any whose attempts at doing so were less than serious!

In addition to Bromham, Derek was a regular supporter of ringing at Oakley, Kempston, and Elstow, where in more recent years he rose to the challenge of ringing a number of increasingly challenging minor methods, being very pleased to achieve quarter peals of most of them.

Derek greatly valued his membership of the Ancient Society of College Youths to which he was elected in January 1985. He rang one peal with the Society, of Grandsire Triples at Bromham in September 1999, and for a number of years, he enjoyed attending the annual dinner.

Derek rang seventy-six peals in total, sixty-one of them for the Bedfordshire Association, including one each of London Major, Grandsire Caters, and Plain Bob Royal. Those would have been quite an achievement for him and he was rightly proud of them. Twenty-seven of his peals were at Bromham, including his last, Grandsire Triples on 31 Dec 2014, rung in honour of his 80th Birthday in June of that year, when many enjoyed a memorable celebration that he very generously hosted in Bromham village hall.

Although following retirement he became a little more relaxed, Derek will be fondly remembered for his polite and very formal manner, and perhaps in contrast, a certain quirkiness that caused some amusement. Invariably he dressed in a suit with tie and was keen to ensure that proper etiquette and protocol was followed in all matters, although beneath the façade he would enjoy sharing an indiscretion or politically incorrect joke or comment. For many years he resolutely refused to admit to having a home telephone and it became something of a sport amongst district ringers to

◀ find his number and be the first to call him. Despite it being customary to go to the pub after ringing, he would never do so unless invited personally.

His timing was impeccable and he was utterly reliable; he was always exactly on time never arriving for any event either late or early. However, he could be unpredictable. One Christmas Day he was spotted in the Magna Tandoori restaurant in Bedford accompanied by five ladies! On the Kempston ringers coach outings it became the custom for Derek to stand during the final few miles of the return journey to offer a rather immoderate vote of thanks, despite the fact that by then most of the party were oblivious to his efforts, having spent a good part of the day and evening in the pub. And his abortive attempts to retrieve a bunch of flowers from a cupboard and present it to the judges of the Ridgman Trophy competition at Kempston were quite hilarious and will long be remembered by those who were there. Derek could usually be relied on to provide a serious and professional explanation for any of the defective road or traffic “improvement” schemes inflicted on the Bedfordshire population, even though he probably had no involvement in them and knew he was being teased.

Above all though, Derek was genuine; a real gentleman who enjoyed his ringing and greatly valued the friendships he made through it. He equally enjoyed the social occasions and the banter that often occurred. He was a very good and loyal friend, who will be affectionately remembered and very sadly missed.

Derek passed away peacefully at home on the evening of Tuesday 21 June, nine days short of his 88th birthday. Sadly, he had been suffering from an undiagnosed degenerative condition for a few years and was receiving palliative care at home following several recent hospital admissions. His funeral was held at Bromham, a warm sunny day, when over 150 parishioners, friends, and work colleagues filled the church to capacity; a reflection of the esteem in which he was held. The bells were rung half-muffled before and after the service, which was followed by a wake at The Prince of Wales, Derek’s favourite local hostelry, where fond memories were shared and stories told. May he rest in peace.

### **K Neil Harper**

**Born 13 January 1942**

**Died 7 August 2022 - Aged 80**

**At Bedford School 1953-1960 – Redburn**

Neil became a Customs Officer in Zimbabwe.

He had an unpleasant experience in the 1986 when together with one of his colleagues, John Austin, he was detained without trial in Chikurubi Maximum Security Prison for two years because they had been too honest and professional in their posts! The effectiveness of Customs and Excise against Mandrax smuggling into South Africa (via Harare) in industrial quantities, the smuggling of luxury cars north of the Limpopo (Mercedes and BMWs) on a commercial scale and other South African international commercial sanctions-busting scams, involving the connivance and profit of CIO and Zanu PF in Harare, were certainly less than helpful to the criminal minds of the new order. Both men were labelled ‘South African Spies’

Although released unconditionally after two years in Chikurubi and other places of detention and interrogation

facility, it was made clear to Neil that not only that his 28-year career in Customs & Excise was over, but that his personal safety could not be guaranteed if he chose to stay in Zimbabwe.

Neil left Zimbabwe permanently for the UK within weeks of his last release from Chikurubi.

Neil retired to live on the Isle of Wight with his wife Mary. Neil died in August 2022 after a long battle with cancer.



### **Sir James P I Hennessy**

**KBE CMG**

**Born 26 September 1923**

**Died 25 February 2024 -**

**Aged 100**

**At Bedford School**

**1937-1941 – Bromham**

James Patrick Ivan Hennessy was the son of Richard G Hennessy, DSO, MC (1919-

24). The family had moved to Bedford for the duration of WW2 as Richard, who had remained on the Officers Reserve since WW1, had a premonition that this might last for some time. James was concerned for his father who had gone to France at the start of WW2, with his battalion. Although he had survived four years in the trenches in 1914-18, when the average life of a subaltern was ten days, James could not help wondering if he would be as lucky again. On the 10th June, unannounced, he arrived back home in Bedford, bedraggled and exhausted after being bombed and strafed on the beaches of Dunkirk – one of the last to get off. That is when the war began for James. No more worries about careers: there was only one path ahead. He would go into the Army, as generations of his forebears had done, and do his bit. He took his turn on the school rooftops at night, looking out for fires. The following year, in December 1941, after completing his Higher Certificate he signed up for the Gunners.

He joined the Royal Artillery in 1942, and after two years was seconded to the Indian Army as adjutant and battery commander, 6th Indian Field Regiment. He was demobilised in 1946 and went to King’s College, Newcastle, completing his studies later at Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge, and the LSE.

Graduating in 1948, James joined the colonial service as a district officer in Basutoland, a colony surrounded by South Africa. Promoted to District Commissioner, he became joint secretary to the country’s constitutional commission, supervisor of elections in 1959 and secretary to the executive council. In 1961 James was seconded to the British High Commission in Pretoria; and returned to Basutoland as permanent secretary for local government in 1964, was a member of the legislative council in 1965 and, after independence in 1966, Secretary for External Affairs, Defence and Internal Security. After a brief spell in the Lesotho prime minister’s office, he joined the diplomatic service in 1968.

His first posting, to Uruguay, proved a baptism of fire. Barely had he arrived in January 1971 than Ambassador Jackson was ambushed while being driven to the embassy and held by his captors in a “people’s prison” to embarrass the government of President Pacheco. James took charge of the embassy as the Foreign Office sent out first a security adviser to strengthen diplomatic protection, then Edward

Heath's special representative, Oliver Wright, to help negotiate Jackson's release. Eight months later, James was informed by an anonymous phone call that he would find Jackson in a church, where the guerrillas had left him to make his confession. Driving there in the ambassadorial Daimler, James took Jackson to the British Hospital, where he asked for a scotch before being given the medical all-clear.

Idi Amin was already making waves when James was appointed High Commissioner to Uganda (and Rwanda) for three nerve-racking and at times humiliating years, with Amin at the height of his barbaric unpredictability. Soon after he arrived, the capricious dictator urged the incoming Labour government to "forget the past" and send the country secretarial tutors and military mechanics.

In May 1974, having realised he was becoming a laughingstock, Amin dropped in on James and his wife for a dip in their pool, and asked him to invite the Archbishop of Canterbury and the BBC to Uganda.

Days after James invited Amin to his Queen's birthday celebrations, the dictator threatened to expel the 1,000 Britons in Uganda. James flew to London to reassess relations, while Jomo Kenyatta persuaded Amin to hold back. On his return, he was summoned to Amin's "command post" for a series of rambling lectures. After SNP gains in that autumn's election, James was handed copies of a letter from Amin to the Soviet Union, China and the UN urging formation of a Scottish provisional government. "The leaders of the Scots provisional government have also asked me to inform their excellencies that England is now bankrupt," the letter added.

In 1974 Amin expelled 14 British diplomats, declaring the handful remaining in Kampala "the slaves of Africans". Aware that he was being depicted as a buffoon by the British press, Amin habitually used James as a sounding board for his rage against the British media. But at times the menace was personal: Amin threatened him with "serious steps" when he protested after Denis Hills, a British lecturer, arrested for describing Amin in an unpublished book as a "village tyrant", had been being denied legal representation. In June 1975 James was summoned to meet Amin, who told him that two other Britons had been arrested as spies and Hills had been charged with treason; Hills would be shot unless Callaghan flew to Kampala within a week. Having studied reports from James the prime minister, Harold Wilson, told Amin that Callaghan would come within 10 days. When he arrived, Amin, wearing a Seaforth Highlanders' glengarry and with five rows of medals on his Air Force uniform, kept him waiting half an hour, then sat down with him under a portrait of Gaddafi. Callaghan flew Hills out, insisting no bargain had been struck and believing his visit had safeguarded the lives of 700 Britons still in Uganda. Amin said of James: "No one should say I don't like him. I am very happy with him. He is very intelligent and the only man I can discuss Mr Hills with." He told Callaghan the two spies had been released – James was sure they had never existed.

A week later, Amin arrived at an Organisation of African Unity conference in Kampala on a chair borne by four expats.

After the raid on Entebbe by Israeli special forces in 1976 to free 100 hostages from a hijacked airliner, James flew to London to tell Callaghan's successor Anthony Crosland that 75-year-old Dora Bloch, a British/Israeli citizen

taken to hospital from the aircraft, had been abducted by Amin's security service and murdered. The murder of Mrs Bloch – taken from Mulango hospital which was Britain's independence gift to Uganda – was the last straw. James met Amin for an hour to discuss the case; Amin claimed he knew nothing about it and was ordering an inquiry. When James sought clarification, Amin refused to see him and accused James Horrocks, acting High Commissioner in James's absence, of conniving in Mrs Bloch's abduction. A second secretary at the High Commission, who had seen her in the hospital with two plainclothes guards, was expelled.

Relations thawed after the Hills episode, but James remained in London for "consultations", then in 1977 was appointed Consul-General in Cape Town.

Three years later, he was despatched to Belize as Governor and Commander-In-Chief. Moves to grant the colony independence were frustrated by a territorial claim from Guatemala. On the eve of a constitutional conference in London, James declared a state of emergency after two days of strikes and riots by government workers demanding independence. That summer, James was tipped off that a Panamanian ship off Belize was carrying a large consignment of marijuana. A Royal Navy frigate closed in, supported by a Harrier from Belize, and £31.5 million worth of drugs were seized.

James retired after Belize became independent that September. Then, at the start of 1982, he took up a new challenge as Chief Inspector for Prisons. His brief covered England and Wales, but his most notable investigation concerned Northern Ireland. In September 1983, 38 IRA men broke out of the Maze prison after guns were smuggled into a supposedly secure compound. Nineteen got away including the senior Provisionals Brendan Macfarlane and Gerard Kelly, and several – to the intense embarrassment of the authorities – were never recaptured.

There were calls for the Northern Ireland Secretary James Prior to resign, notably from Enoch Powell, and Prior – saying he would only go if there had been a failure of policy – asked James to investigate. His report blamed faults in the design of the prison, poor security procedures, human weakness, negligence and inadequate management, for which he held the governor, Ernest Whittington, responsible. Whittington resigned; Prior and his prisons minister Nicholas Scott stayed on. Whittington's deputy, William McConnell, was murdered by the IRA after going on television to comment.

When the 19 recaptured escapers went on trial for murder in 1987 the judge, Lord Lowry, criticised James for refusing to let the prosecution see statements taken during his inquiry. James said he had promised witnesses their evidence would not be published; moreover, it was not needed to support the Crown's case.

James tried to persuade ministers that more prisons, longer sentences and a tougher regime would not solve the problem of rising crime. He observed of the Thatcher government's "short, sharp shock" approach to young offenders that the boys adjusted to it, while prison staff did not like it. And he repeatedly warned that conditions in some jails were "close to breaking point".

After a wave of riots at 46 prisons in May 1986, the Home Secretary Douglas Hurd asked James to investigate. He blamed "the worst night of violence the English prison service ►

◀ has ever known” on gross overcrowding, squalid conditions and industrial action by prison officers, with £5.5 million worth of damage, 800 places lost and 45 inmates having escaped.

Later that year, James blamed “regrettable lapses of security” for a Category A prisoner facing two attempted murder charges being “sprung” from St Mary’s Hospital, Paddington. Officers guarding him had been out of radio range, and unaccountably allowed him visitors. James stepped down in 1988 with a call for a prison ombudsman to be appointed. For three years more, he was a member of the Parole Board. He was appointed MBE in 1959, OBE in 1968, CMG in 1975 and knighted in 1982. He was President of the Old Bedfordians Club from 1986-1989.

James married Patricia Unwin in 1947. They retired to Castle Douglas, Scotland. Pat died in 2015. Together they had five daughters, Anne, Kate, Sue, Jane and Jilly and a son who died young. He had seventeen grandchildren and thirteen great-grandchildren.

Adapted from *The Telegraph*



**Col Ben J Herman RM,  
LVO**

**Born 30 December 1934  
Died 30 November 2022 –  
Aged 87**

**At Bedford School  
1946-1953 – Paulo Pontine**

Benjamin John Herman was born in Karachi, Sindh, Pakistan.

Ben joined the Royal Marines in 1953, and was

commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in 1954, receiving a regular commission in 1955. He served with 40 Commando, Royal Marines, and was Military Assistant and Aide-de-Camp to the Commandant-General Royal Marines in 1964.

He attended the Royal Naval Staff College in 1966 and was promoted to Major 1971. He was then seconded to Buckingham Palace to work as Equerry in Waiting to Prince Philip, and later as Private Secretary to Princess Anne. Discretion, integrity, and impeccable social and organisational skills were prerequisites of his job in the Royal Household and he considered it an honour to have been selected, especially since the Duke of Edinburgh was Captain General of his regiment. The Household of The Princess Royal provides the administrative support to the Princess Royal. It is based at Buckingham Palace, and is headed by the Private Secretary. He was made a Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order (LVO) and this significant honour, in the sole gift of the reigning monarch, was awarded to him in recognition of his service to the Royal Household.

After his service in the Royal Household he returned to the Royal Marines, and did the Senior Officers War Course in 1976, and joined the staff of the Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command, Commando Training Centre. He was Chief Training Officer from 1977-1978, and promoted to Lieutenant-Colonel.

Ben was married twice and has 5 children. Ben’s son, Mark (77-80), brother, Colin (46-48), father, B E Heman MBE (1908-14), grandfather B R Herman, and several uncles were all OBs.



**Major Peter  
B L Hoppe**

**Born 15 November  
1929**

**Died 29 May 2024 -  
Aged 94**

**At Bedford School  
1939-1948 -  
St Peter’s**

Peter was born in Oxford, eldest son of Hugh L Hoppe (19-23) and Irene (Milligan), the eldest of four brothers enrolled at Bedford School, David (39-50), Alastair (48-59) and Angus (53-64). Hugh had relinquished his Danish citizenship to sign up with the British Army at the start of WW2, had been captured by the Japanese in Singapore and spent 4 years as a prisoner of war.

At School Peter was not an academic, and despite being small when young, he threw himself into his rugby, initially a scrum half, and his boxing. He was mentored through his time at Bedford by Jack Carlton, a one-legged veteran who used to ride his bike to school & who recognized Peter’s talent and unwavering bravery as a Boxer. His belief in Peter’s talent was well repaid as he won the School Championship at all weights he boxed, ultimately at light heavyweight and captained the team. He was also by now a useful rugby player as a prop.

After school, Peter’s army career began – initially he joined through National Service with the Gordon Highlanders -as the only English sounding member of his platoon, despite his Scottish heritage from his mother, his boxing came in handy! He had a fairly inauspicious start to his army career as, having finished his basic training, he was dispatched to a unit in Germany, only to be asked on arrival “what are you doing here, Hoppe, you should be in Fort George!” So, a long trip back across the channel and train ride to join his regiment. After nine months with the regiment his talents were recognized, and he was recommended for a commission.

Following his time at Sandhurst, where he played regularly in the Sandhurst rugby scrum and was awarded his ‘Blue’ for rugby, his long association with the Duke of Wellington’s regiment began and he was a Proud Duke until the day he died. He spent some time with the 2nd Parachute Regiment on secondment and was in Suez at the time of the crisis there. Boxing and Rugby (with the Dirty Dukes who had more than a handful of International Players – both Union and League, as of course National Service meant many lads spent time with the regiment), took up much of Peter’s time and his prowess and reputation as a Boxer only grew. Whilst at Sandhurst, he captained the Sandhurst boxing team, and most others he joined, and having won the BAOR Light Heavyweight title, in April 1952 he became the first commissioned officer to win the Army Championship fighting in the Royal Albert Hall, beating several boxers who had boxed for England, and who would later turn professional. Peter was not so much a skilful boxer, more of a Staffordshire Bull Terrier type – a hard punch, strong jaw and an unwavering will to win and bravery.

A newspaper cutting from the Daily Mirror at the time reads:

***Private didn’t strike the officer hard enough ...***

*‘Gerry McNally, 19 year old ROAC private, had the chance that some soldiers sigh for - to hit an Army officer as hard and as often as he liked. Yet McNally, English international amateur*

boxer, didn't hit often enough and the officer, Sec. Lieut Peter Hoppe, 22, of the Duke of Wellington's Regiment, won the Army light-weight title on a majority verdict at the Albert Hall. 'And so the barrel-chested Hoppe, first officer to compete in the other ranks' championship since WWI, now goes forward to the quarter finals of the ARA championships.

It was whilst serving with The Dukes in Northern Ireland that Peter met Audrey McTighe, and they were married in Belfast in 1959 and had three children: Anne born in 1961, Andrew in 1963 and Clare in 1970. The family travelled around to wherever the Dukes, and The Burma Rangers in Eppo, Malaysia with whom Peter also spent some time, were based, including Malaysia and eventually to Hong Kong where tragically Audrey was diagnosed with skin cancer. The family moved back to Chester so Audrey could be treated, but sadly she died in 1972.

Peter met and married Sue Le Mesurier in 1976 and the family moved with the Regiment to Minden (Germany), Catterick and finally Harrogate and the Army Apprentice College where Peter was posted prior to his retirement from the army in November 1984. Peter and Sue then moved to Gosforth in about 1988.

Religion played a huge part in Peter and Sue's lives and they were active members of the Church and Parish for many years, Peter immersed himself in the community and the parish, visiting old servicemen and women and people in nursing homes in the area.

Travel was also a big part of their lives, and they spent time in Jersey, Spain and other regions. In 1999 Peter undertook the Pilgrimage Route Santiago de Compostela but it was whilst he was away in the Pyrenees, that Sue was diagnosed with MS.

Peter was a loving & devoted carer for Sue, and they moved to an apartment that was so much more accessible for them both. They still travelled, buying a small caravan, that Peter could wheel Sue into, and she could direct the driving. They bought an apartment in St. Helier and travelled to see friends in Spain regularly. Ultimately, however, the horrible disease progressed and sadly Sue died in 2013.

As was Peter's wont, he immersed himself in as many activities as he could. The Church, the History Society, painting classes, weekly hikes and, a surprise for the family was him volunteering for the Gosforth Park gardening volunteers - he hated gardening! He continued to support and attend the MS Society and weekly exercise meetings for as long as he was able. He continued to travel and went out to Hong Kong and Thailand with his family, always with his small brown antique suitcase - he was not a heavy packer!

By 2022 Peter's eyesight began to fail and with the onset of dementia he moved into a nursing home. Music was a great comfort to him, and the other residents had to get used to the sounds of Scottish Country dancing and regimental band music, in particular the Pipes and Drums.

Sadly, Peter's daughter Clare died in 2022. He is survived by his daughter Anne, son Andrew, and five grandchildren.

### Michael J Jennings

**Born 9 May 1934**

**Died 12 March 2022 - Aged 87**

**At Bedford School 1943-1951 - Paulo Pontine**

Michael was born in Bedfordshire, son of Joseph W G Jennings and Mona M J Hunt. After working on a farm for

eighteen months after leaving School, Michael attended a two years' course in Agriculture at Shuttleworth College, Old Warden. He obtained the College Diploma and the National Diploma in Agriculture. After a further short period on a farm, he was called up for National Service in the R.A.F. and was stationed at Cardington with the Balloon Unit.

He married Shirley Connold in 1957 and they had four children and lived in Suffolk.



### Richard B Kerr

**Born 14 December 1944**

**Died 8 December 2023 -**

**Aged 78**

**At Bedford School**

**1952-1962 - Pemberley**

Richard studied the clarinet and sang in the choir at School, once performing the solo part in *Once in Royal David's City*.

The first record he bought was Eddie Cochran's *Twenty Flight Rock*, though his biggest influence was Buddy Holly, he recalled, and he "couldn't stop playing" *All Shook Up* by Elvis Presley.

When he left school he was taken on by the wine department at Fortnum & Mason, living in a boarding house where there was a grand piano in the sitting room. He began writing songs on it, despite never having played the instrument in his life. He started hawking his work around Tin Pan Alley, with some success, and put out a couple of singles under his own name - as a result of which Fortnum & Mason, not wanting to be associated with anything as common as pop music, fired him. In 1968 his song *Blue Eyes* was a hit for Don Partridge, the busking "one-man band" best known for *Blue Eyes'* predecessor, *Rosie*.

He went on to work with the American musician Scott English - who began writing the lyrics for *Brandy* when he was attending the annual Midem music-industry expo in Cannes. It was, he said, about wanting to leave his wife but lacking the courage to do so (though he did, eventually). When he got back to England he and Richard started working on it in 1971

Barry Manilow only recorded the song in 1974, renamed *Mandy*, at the insistence of Clive Davis, his label boss at Arista. The title was changed to avoid confusion with *Brandy (You're a Fine Girl)*, a 1972 hit for the American band Looking Glass; Richard had no idea that Manilow had taken on the song until he was at Rondor music publishers in Los Angeles and heard it being played in one of the offices.

"I couldn't actually pick out the fact straight away that it was 'Mandy' as opposed to 'Brandy' that was being sung, but when I did find out, I was absolutely livid that someone had changed the title without asking us. Until I saw it zooming up the charts." 'Mandy' was Barry's first chart topper.

Although Barry preferred writing his own songs, he recorded several more by Richard, including *Somewhere in the Night* and *Looks Like We Made It* - because, Richard said, "Clive wanted him to."

Richard met the singer only three times, he reckoned, at music-business functions, and Manilow did suggest they sit down at the piano and write together. But Richard told him: "I can't imagine how that would work, Barry."

He often collaborated with others, including English folk singer Don Partridge, Fleetwood Mac founder Peter Green, ►

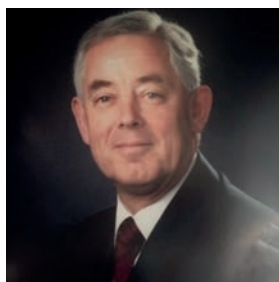
◀ and often collaborated with lyricist Will Jennings, and the pair wrote a string of big hits for other artists, especially Manilow. They include Manilow's "Looks Like We Made It," "I'll Never Love This Way Again" for Dionne Warwick, and "Somewhere in the Night" for Helen Reddy that Barry later recorded and had a bigger hit. Roy Orbison recorded In the Real World: "Roy was the one with the least glitter about him," Richard recalled, "he was such a humble man."

All told, Richard's songs garnered multiple Grammy Award nominations, over a dozen BMI Awards, and over 40 million records sold. Frank Sinatra covered *Blue Eyes* – surely the only song in his back catalogue that had been made famous by a busker – while John Denver recorded another of Richard's songs, *Don't Close Your Eyes*. His work has also been recorded by such artists as Bonnie Raitt, Kenny Rogers, Frankie Valli, Gladys Knight, Michael Ball, Johnny Mathis, Tom Jones, Andy Williams, Herb Alpert, Kenny Rogers, Natalie Cole, Rita Coolidge and the Righteous Brothers. In 2003 Mandy became Westlife's 12th UK No 1 after Simon Cowell suggested they cover it.

Richard also wrote and released a number of solo albums, showcasing his own talents as a singer and performer.

Richard married Charlotte Aldred, an interior designer, in 1991; who survives him.

Adapted from *The Telegraph*



**Simon N S Kimber**  
Born 21 September 1947  
Died 10 September 2024 –  
Aged 76

At Bedford School  
1958-1965 – Talbot's

Simon Nicholas Scott Kimber was born to Gwen and Derek Kimber in Bath, the eldest of

four siblings.

They moved to Glasgow when he was young as his father went to be part of the management of Fairfields shipyard in Govan.

He attended prep school at Darden in Kilmalcolm before following in his father's footsteps to be a boarder at Bedford School from the age of 11.

Following Bedford he went to the University of Glasgow, initially studying Civil Engineering before switching to Mathematics. After University he joined Provident Mutual Life Assurance in London and was there for his whole career (surviving 3 mergers in the last few years) until his retirement at age 55.

He married Rosemary Tattersall in August 1975 in Batley, Yorkshire.

Golf was always a large part of his recreational time and on retirement it became an even bigger part of his life. He held the roles of John O'Gaunt Golf Club Treasurer and Captain and was proud to have been recently made an honorary member of the club.

He was also heavily involved with Bedfordshire County Golf Union, being both the captain and president in recent years. During his presidency the county won the England Golf County of the year. In 2014, he became captain of the Old Bedfordian Golf society and spent many happy days in Deal and Royal St George's playing, supporting and helping to organise the Halford Hewitt Cup.

Simon is survived by his wife Rosemary, his 2 children, Nick (88-97) and Helen, and two grandchildren, Felix and James.



**Michael C Kish**  
Born 22 November 1941  
Died 9 August 2024 - Aged 82  
At Bedford School  
1951-1958 - Ashburnham

Michael was the son of Cyril and Winnie Kish who were well known in Bedford for their Bakery and supplying the Tuck Shop.

When he left the School, he went on to study Food Technology at Cambridge where he won many Awards and Medals. His passion for Model Railways led to his wife and he setting up a successful business supplying the hobby industry.

He was DVP for Cambridgeshire a role that suited his outgoing personality.

He is survived by his wife Danusza, two daughters and four grandchildren



**David J Lockett**  
Born 10 May 1929  
Died 14 May 2022 -  
Aged 92

At Bedford School  
1937-1947 - Paulo Pontine

**John M B Long**

Born 4 September 1933  
Died 8 February 2024 - Aged 90

At Bedford School 1945-1951 – Bromham

John studied at London University and became a physiotherapist.



**H W Alan Loxley**  
Born 8 February 1926  
Died 31 August 2023 - Aged 97  
At Bedford School  
1937-1943 - Ashburnham

Alan was born in 1926 in Toronto. His father and grandfather travelled to Canada for long working spells in the years before

the First World War, and the day after Alan's parents married, they sailed again for Canada, where they remained until the economic consequences of the Depression made a return to Bedford, the family base, the best plan. In 1937 Alan won a scholarship to Bedford School, where he excelled both academically and on the rugby field, fuelling a lifelong passion for the game. In 1943 he joined the navy and served on HMS Vindex on two Arctic convoys to Murmansk, for which service he was later awarded the Arctic Star.

At the end of the war the crew of Vindex were instructed to make their way to India, where Alan spent two very happy years, taking on duties as wide-ranging as legal representation for criminal cases and being the entertainments officer.

Returning in 1947 and leaving the navy during Britain's post-war reduction of the armed forces, he resumed his education, studying quantity surveying and civil engineering at

North London Polytechnic. He would become a civil engineer, spending many of those years with the construction company Kier. One of the flagship projects in which he was involved during this period was the building of Tilbury Power Station B. He also worked on bridge construction, roads and housing throughout his career.

Alan married Bunty Mackness in 1952. They had first met in Bedford, and he originally asked her out to win a bet that he wouldn't dare to. They were to remain together for 53 years.

On retirement Alan joined the Essex Wildlife Trust as a volunteer, working at Hanningfield Reservoir, near Chelmsford. There he channelled his practical building and carpentry skills into making and maintaining picnic tables and nesting boxes for bats and birds, building bridges, and forestry work. It was an association that lasted for over a quarter of a century. When old age meant that Alan could no longer help with the physical work, he still enjoyed contributing in an advisory capacity. He loved plants and animals, particularly dogs.

Following the passing of Bunty in 2005, those 'getting on with it' skills that Alan had developed during his naval service stood him in good stead, coupled with his very pragmatic approach to life and his occasionally mischievous sense of humour. With the unrelenting support and friendship of his neighbours he was able to live a happy and independent life into extreme old age.

He is survived by his sons Robin and Simon, his daughter-in-law Sarah, and his grandchildren, Teddy, Will, Jamie and Charlie.



### **Brian L Marsh**

**Born 29 May 1936**

**Died 22 May 2024 - Aged 87**

**At Bedford School**

**1944-1954 – Burnaby**

Brian was born in Bromley, Kent, and in his early years the family moved around the country due

to the nature of his father's work as an electrical engineer. During the latter years of the WW2 the family were living in Coventry, and it was felt that Brian would be safer at a boarding school in a quieter part of the country.

Bedford School was the chosen destination, but prospective students were first required to pass an entrance exam. At this time Brian was attending a 'dame school' and his teachers were clearly excited that one of their pupils could possibly move onto a public school. As he sat the exam the ladies watched over him and rubbed out any wrong answers, encouraging him to have another attempt at the questions! Needless to say, the exam was passed and at 7 years of age Brian moved to Bedford School.

On his first night the town of Bedford was bombed but luckily the school was not hit. Brian recalled that the interiors of the buildings were shored up with scaffolding to prevent collapse if the school became a target. Initially Brian disliked school life but gradually this changed, and he grew to love his time there, staying until he was eighteen and had completed A levels. He was a keen sportsman, enjoying rugby, rowing, running and rifle shooting. Music and drama were also particularly enjoyed as he sang in the choir and was part of the backstage crew in drama productions.

On leaving school Brian intended to study agriculture at Hartpury College in Gloucestershire but got called up for

National Service instead. He joined the Royal Artillery and spent much of his service years in North Wales, a part of the country he always loved.

On returning from National Service Brian finally enrolled at Hartpury College. The only sport played there at the time was football, but as Brian and many of his classmates were keen rugby players they were instrumental in not only forming the first ever Hartpury rugby team but also the installation of the first ever rugby pitch at the college.

In 1959 Brian purchased a small farm and from modest beginnings began a successful mixed farming enterprise with poultry as the mainstay but also including calf rearing, beef fattening and farm gate sales. At this time Brian met his future wife Helen, and they were married in 1963. Their early success was noted by The Farmers Weekly who visited the farm to write an article about the enterprising couple in 1965. The farming business grew over the years and eventually in 2006 Brian and Helen decided to retire and hand over the day to day running of the farm to their son.

Never a couple to sit still, Brian and Helen then took the opportunity to enjoy more holidays both at home and abroad. They spent many years and hundreds of miles, in all weathers, travelling the English canal networks. Travel abroad included rail journeys across Canada, America, Sweden and Norway. Later they swapped to steam and travelled the length of the UK by steam hauled trains. Brian always had a love of steam and in his retirement build a 4" scale Burrell GP Traction Engine followed by a 4" scale Foden Steam Tractor.

Another passion of Brian's was motorsport, and he attended the driving school at Prescott Hill Speed Climb. He was subsequently persuaded to help with marshalling on race days and went on to get his own racing licence and became a competitor.

Throughout his life Brian demonstrated his long-standing support to his community as a school governor, parish councillor, churchwarden and choir member. For a number of years he paid for the supply of fuel for the church heating, which necessitated some creative accounting of the farm books! As a member of the choir this gave him the opportunity to sing the *Messiah* at the Royal Albert Hall, which he enjoyed and was very proud of.

Brian is survived by his wife Helen, three children and four grandchildren.

### **Charles Matthew**

**Born 15 August 1936**

**Died 24 June 2024 - Aged 87**

**At Bedford School 1943-1954 - Talbot's**

Charles did his National Service with The Black Watch where he played rugby for his regiment and then for London Scottish. He enjoyed rowing and after National Service rowed for six months for Kensington Rowing Club. He later rowed for six years at Putney RC.

He then moved to Hereford and pursued a career in NHS Supplies Management. He is survived by his two daughters.

### **Brian J (Joe) Mitchell**

**Born 12 March 1943**

**Died 1 June 2019 - Aged 76**

**At Bedford School 1956-1960 - Redburn**

◀ **Michael J H Mortimer****Born 15 December 1936****Died 17 June 2023 - Aged 86****At Bedford School 1948-1955 - Crescent****John O Murray-Clarke****Born 30 July 1933****Died 30 December 2023 - Aged 90****At Bedford School 1946-1952 - St Peter's**

John was born in Sri Lanka to tea planter William O Murray-Clarke and Maryon (Munday). He was head of Talbot's, in the 1<sup>st</sup> XI, the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV, Captain of the Athletics team and a Monitor.

John married LizAnn in 1960 and they had three sons, Paul (76-79), Iain (78-81) and Duncan.

**Dr Conolly (Con) S Norman****Born 5 September 1936****Died 25 September 2022 -****Aged 86****At Bedford School****1950-1954 - Kirkman's**

Born in Dublin, Ireland, Con was the son of Conolly Norman (1904-1911) and Marcella (nee Gorman). In his formative years, Con

attended St. Stephen's School in Dublin before coming to Bedford, followed by Trinity College, Dublin, after which he started a career in medicine, attaining the position of Hematopathologist.

Con moved to Montreal in 1968 and then spent twenty-six years in Toronto from 1969 to 1995 during which time he worked at the Wellesley Hospital. In 1995, he called Saint John home, working at the Saint John Regional Hospital until 2003 and at the QE II Health Sciences Centre in Halifax from 2003 until 2007.

Con enjoyed the outdoors. He was a passionate sailor who loved the water, a keen squash player, a lover of cycling and tried his hand at golf. He will be missed by his family and many friends.

Con will be lovingly remembered by his wife, partner and best friend of 32 years, Sharon; children, Nicholas Norman of Toronto, ON and daughter Martha Norman (Roch Smith) of Toronto, ON as well as their mother, Sheelagh, his first wife (married in 1964)

**Ian J Northern****Born 10 May 1959****Died 8 July 2024 - Aged 65****At Bedford School****1967-1977 - St Peter's**

Ian was the second of three brothers from a farming family in Harrold. Academically, he was an all-rounder, though particularly strong in maths and the sciences. He also played for the 2<sup>nd</sup> XV and

was a keen marksman in the shooting range.

After school, Ian went up to Keble College, Oxford, to read Agriculture and Forestry, where he took an active part in college

life. He played football both for his college team and for Carlton village, when at home. Later, he took up cycling for exercise.

After graduation, Ian qualified as an accountant and worked for Deloitte, based first in London and then in Milton Keynes, before returning to the family farm in Harrold. For many years, Ian ran the farm alongside his father, who died in 2012, and his younger brother Stephen (71-81). More recently, Ian's son Henry (94-04) joined them in the farming partnership after completing a PhD at Oxford.

Ian served on the committees of both the Preparatory School Parents' Association and the Friends of Bedford School Rowing Club. He and his wife, Ros, spent many weekends on riverbanks around the country watching Henry row for the 1<sup>st</sup> VIII; and Ian himself rowed in a Past Parents' Club crew, including at Bedford Regatta.

Family played a big part in Ian's life. He was never happier than when surrounded by his family and dogs at home in Harrold or at his cottage in Norfolk. He is survived by his widow, Ros, whom he had met in Bedford during his final year at school. They married in 1983. He was also a proud father to their children, Henry and Celia, and grandfather to Wilf and Barnaby.

Ian was liked and respected throughout the farming community and beyond and had many close friends from his school and university days. He was kind and thoughtful and took an active interest in a wide range of subjects in addition to farming and rural life. His endless patience and warm, welcoming smile inspired affection and loyalty from all who met him.

**David J O'Meara****Born 16 July 1945****Died 4 January 2006 - Aged 60****At Bedford School****1954-1963 - Pemberley****Ian R Pell****Born 31 December 1964****Died 16 July 2024 - Aged 59****At Bedford School****1972-1981 - Paulo Pontine**

Ian went into the family farming business and built up a successful farm shop at Southend Farm, Renhold, Bedford. Pell's Farm Shop and nursery has been established for over 40 years providing loyal customers with a huge range of freshly cut vegetables from their farms.

**Robert (Bob) I Penlington****Born 2 February 1932****Died 28 March 2024 -****Aged 92****At Bedford School****1944-1949 - Talbot's**

Bob was born in Malaysia to John Flower Penlington, and his wife Gladys Iva May (Smith).

**The Revd Peter L Pickett****Born 19 October 1928****Died 17 March 2024 - Aged 95****At Bedford School****1941-1947 - Glanrafon**



Peter joined Bedford School as a day boy in 1941, becoming a boarder in 1942 after the death of his father. He was a great sportsman, excelling in squash, fives and cricket and was in the final of the Public Schools' Fives competition in March 1946. Peter was Deputy Head of School, Head of Glanrafon, Captain of Fives and Vice-Captain of the 1<sup>st</sup> XI.

Peter went to Guy's Hospital to study Dentistry and was appointed Residential Dental Surgeon in 1952. He met his wife Janet Stevens and they married in 1953 and went on to have four children together.

After Guy's, Peter did his National Service with the RAF as Flying Officer, in Odiham at the fighter command station there. In 1954 they moved to Eastbourne, where he became a dental partner in a Christian dental practice, 16 College Rd. He was chairman of the Eastbourne branch of the Dental Association from 1970-1972.

Peter had been considering ordination for sometime, and from 1983-1986, attended Salisbury and Wells Theological College while continuing with dentistry. In 1987 he retired from dentistry and became a non-stipendiary priest in charge at All Saints Church, Danehill for five very happy and fulfilling years.

1992 saw him and Janet returning to Eastbourne where they spent their retirement very actively engaged in church life, first at Holy Trinity and then at St John's, Meads. Janet sadly died in 2009 which was a hard time, but Peter remained positive and enjoyed being with friends and family, also keeping up with his sport and playing golf regularly with friends.

By 2023 Parkinson's was taking its toll and he went into Carlisle Lodge Nursing Home in Eastbourne where he was beautifully and lovingly cared for until his death in March 2024.



**Frank A Pinguet**  
**Born 26 March 1930**  
**Died 7 May 2024 - Aged 94**  
**At Bedford School**  
**1941-1948 – Pemberley**

Frank served an apprenticeship in the shipbuilding trade in Aberdeen and then emigrated to Canada in 1953. He started at the shipyard in

Collingwood and then moved on to Pacific Finance for about 15 years. He then joined Diners Club, Mastercard, and finally the Bank of Montreal, where ran the collection operation of eight branches across Canada.

He was on Uxbridge Hospital board of directors for 45 years, the Hospital Foundation (fundraiser) for 45 years, chairman of the board for 10 years, and treasurer of Lakeridge Health for 15 years. He married JoAnne in 1956, with Patrick MacCulloch (39-47) as his best man and had 4 children.

Sadly one of his sons died in a motorbike accident in Japan, and JoAnne died in 2023. He is survived by his three children, nine grandchildren and eleven great-grandchildren.



**George S Pink**  
**Born 6 January 1934**  
**Died 5 January 2024 - Aged 89**  
**At Bedford School 1947-1952 -**  
**Kirkman's**

George Pink was born to Herbert (a Chemist with ICI) and Margaret (a Teacher) in Huddersfield, West Yorkshire in 1934 and died on the eve

of his 90th birthday in January 2024. His last words were "I have lived a long and very happy life" and indeed he did!

His long life was dominated by his extremely happy near 70-year marriage to his beloved wife Irene whom he met at a party in London and married in 1958. They had four children who were the apple of his eye, Charles, Susannah, Guy and Nicholas. His family was always George's priority and he was punctilious about being home every night for family dinners and enjoying uproarious family camping holidays.

George came up to Bedford in 1947, in his first interaction meeting John White (45-51) who remained his lifelong closest friend. George much enjoyed sports and was a member of the Rugby 1st XV and the Cricket 1st XI, a notable match for the latter being in 1951 v Luton Grammar School where George is recorded as taking a very useful 4-11 with his leg spin bowling, a skill he tried hard to pass on to his children (with mixed success!).

George was also a great scholar, winning a Whitworth Scholarship and securing a place at Pembroke College, Cambridge to read Engineering. He served his National Service, appropriately in the Royal Engineers, mainly in Sarawak on the island of Borneo. This truly amazing experience saw George living with the local tribes in longhouses deep in the rainforest, where George's job was to blow up rocks in the rivers to secure the only means of passage through the thick rainforest.

Returning home after a near-fatal tropical illness, George went up to Cambridge where he continued to play both Rugby and Cricket whilst achieving a 2.1 in his Engineering degree and meeting Irene. George had a love of classic motorcycles (followed later by a love of Alvis classic cars) and used his motorcycles to visit Irene in London. Irene reports the thrill of being a pillion passenger as they ventured as far as Scotland.

Upon leaving Cambridge George's career focused on using his engineering skills to make things. Starting out at Ruston and Hornsby in Lincoln, George manufactured marine diesel engines, a theme continued when moved upon takeover by English Electric to the latter's famous Vulcan works at Newton-le-Willows Warrington. Here they turned out huge diesel engines for the illustrious "Deltic" class railway engines that plied the East Coast main line from London to Edinburgh.

From there George moved to the happiest part of his career as Production Director for Upper Clyde Shipbuilders at their yards in Glasgow. George loved building ships and his children report the big grin (and big hats for Irene!) on launch days.

Happy days were spent exploring up the West coast of Scotland with the family, Loch Caolisport on the Kintyre Peninsula being a particular family favourite for lazy days spent swimming and canoeing.

Finally George moved to work for Cadbury's, running their chocolate-making plants at Bournville and later Somerdale (the old Fry's factory) near Bristol. It goes without saying that these postings were very popular with the children! ▶

◀ George retired early at age 53 and spent his retirement travelling Europe with Irene in their motor home, Sweden being a particular favourite. The children report that they often had no idea where Mum and Dad were but tracked their progress from the regular postcards!

George died peacefully at home with Irene at his side to the end.



**Robert (Bob) A Plumtre**  
**Born 23 November 1931**  
**Died 10 October 2023 - Aged 91**  
**At Bedford School**  
**1939-1950 – Crescent**

Bob was born in Rajkot, in north-west India, as the third child of the headmaster of the local school. He returned to Britain at the age of seven

and soon after began attending Bedford School. One of his teachers remarked in a school report that he “appears to be handicapped by a constitutional slowness of his hands when writing, but paradoxically, he can be very nippy on the rugger field!” Bob often fondly reminisced about a shell-shocked teacher who would occasionally dangle a boy by his feet from a third-floor window if he misbehaved in class!

After Bedford, Bob went to Christ Church College, Oxford, to study Forestry, where he also enjoyed rowing, earning a blade in the bumps for Christ Church. As was customary at the time, he then completed his National Service, spending time in Libya. During this period, he established a photographic club with darkroom and printing facilities in the desert and organised sports for his platoon. It was here that he learned to sail, a passion he would carry throughout much of his life.

In early 1957, Bob joined the Uganda Forestry Department and was posted to the west of the country as the District Forest Officer (DFO), overseeing both plantations and natural forests. He lived about 250 miles from Mwiriri, where his brother John (39-43) was teaching at Busoga College. During his time in Uganda, Bob built his own sailing boat and started a sailing club on one of the many crater lakes in the region.

He married Joan Lloyd, a former maths and physics teacher at the Gayaza High School for girls in Uganda, in December 1963 in Sharnbrook. The couple then moved back to Kampala, the capital of Uganda. Here, Bob led the Forestry Research Unit at Nakawa, where he studied the properties of many Ugandan timbers. At the time, mahogany was widely used for building timber, window frames, and other purposes, but Bob worked to demonstrate that other species could be suitable for such uses, preserving mahogany for the fine furniture industry that was emerging in Uganda. He later published the Uganda Timber User’s Handbook to guide foresters and craftsmen in the country.

In early 1971, Idi Amin came to power in a coup, accelerating Bob and Joan’s decision to return to the UK to educate their two sons, Andrew and David. Bob wrote up some of his research as part of a Master’s degree at the Oxford Forestry Institute and later became their Senior Research Officer in Wood Utilisation. In this role, he continued training foresters from around the world, sharing techniques he had developed in Uganda, as well as designing solar kilns

and portable bandsaws to assist foresters in the Global South.

Bob was highly commended at the Royal Society of Arts’ Better Environment Awards for Industry in 1987, receiving the award from Prince Charles. In 1997, he was recognized with the International Union of Forestry Research Organizations Distinguished Service Award.



**John E Pullinger**  
**Born 30 May 1925**  
**Died 25 September 2022 -**  
**Aged 97**

**At Bedford School**  
**1936-1941 - St Peter’s**  
 John had left Bedford after the 5<sup>th</sup> form, much to his annoyance, as his parents decided that he had to get a job to ‘man him

up for the army’. After the war he obtained his ARICS and subsequently Associate of Quantity Surveyors. He became a high-level Chartered Surveyor working for the Government. He married Eveline J Pennington in 1950

### **Malcolm Rae**

**Born 1943**  
**Died 15 October 2023 - Aged 80**  
**Bedford School Staff 1985 – 2001**

Malcolm studied Russian Language and Literature at London University. The degree included Slavonic languages, studying Old Church Slavonic texts as well as learning some Polish. 12 years in data processing, mostly in the City of London followed. Conscious that the cut-throat atmosphere in a merchant banking environment was not his ‘glass of grog’ and with his personal life in turmoil at the same time, he cast around for a haven of calm and found it in the teaching profession. Utterly absorbing and addictively challenging, as it defies logic and gravity, Malcolm found it was never boring and had a marvellous sense of purpose and reward which he felt few other posts had.

He joined the Upper School in 1992, having been Head of Maths in the Lower School for seven years. He had chanced his arm at quite a few subjects: Science, History and French during his first year at a prep school in Suffolk; IT and computing AS-level; and when he finally retired, he had a timetable of two-thirds Maths and the rest English.

Having coached many sports, Malcolm’s favourite was cricket, which he felt captured all the nuances and idiosyncrasies of summer sport, an Englishness beyond compare. For medical reasons he gave up cricket coaching in 1996 and divided his time thereafter between badminton, where he set up the Schools match schedule in 1993, and golf. His aim on retirement was to continue extending his qualification to coach golf and also play some more of the top courses in Scotland and abroad.

Malcolm died in Bristol from complications following a fall at his flat. He leaves two sons, Jason and Fraser, and three grandchildren: Xavier, Jacob, and Sacha.

### **F John Rawlins**

**Born 27 January 1934**  
**Died 27 April 2024 - Aged 90**  
**At Bedford School 1942-1951 – Ashburnham**

John went to the Royal Agricultural College, Cirencester and was awarded the Gold Medal in his final exams in Agriculture. He later trained as a surveyor, (RICS).

He married Dierdre Ann Martell in September 1957 and they had two children.



**Chris M Reynolds**  
**Born 21 August 1949**  
**Died 9 July 2023 – Aged 73**  
**At Bedford School 1962-1967 – Sanderson's**

Chris was born in Lincoln, the son of William Reynolds and Eleanor Gill

He studied Transport at Ealing College, London before joining

BOAC in 1970 having been a General Apprentice Trainee with them whilst at College. He rose to be Station Manager and went on temporary assignments to Tokyo, Abu Dhabi, Belfast, Glasgow, Colombo and Dubai and special assignment to Dubai for Indian/Pakistan war 1971-72. He became Group Sales Manager for BOAC/BA in 1972 before emigrating to America to become Sales Manager and Director of Sales for Grand Metropolitan Hotels in 1974.

Chris then moved to Marriott International in 1982 as Director of Incentive Sales in Chicago. During this time, he produced a Movie "How to book business with Incentive Companies" starring buyers from major incentive companies. He was then headhunted by Le Meridien Hotels and Resorts in 1987 before joining Abercrombie & Kent in Orlando, Florida, in 1997, as Director of Group Sales. He moved to ME Productions in 2002 and later San Juan Convention Bureau in 2006 whilst he was caring for his late wife, before becoming an independent Consultant in Incentive Travel in 2008 giving talks on Incentive Travel and the hospitality industry.

He set up a self-funded charity in 2015, KURED, (Keeping Up Respect Enhancements and Dignity) helping members of his local community with no assets for food, medicines etc.

He is survived by his brother David Reynolds OBE (61-66) and his stepson Cary M. Reynolds from Arizona.



**Paul W Ripley**  
**Born 31 July 1942**  
**Died 13 November 2023 - Aged 81**  
**At Bedford School 1956-1959 - Kirkman's**

Paul and I first met as 13-year-olds at Kirkman's and had remained good friends ever since.

Paul was preceded at Bedford School by his father, Roland (23-27), his brothers Richard (51-54) and John (53-56) and followed by his younger brother Bruce (60-64). Sadly, John was fatally injured in a car accident in Germany in 1961, whilst serving with the 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards.

On leaving Bedford in 1959 Paul joined his father in the family haberdashery business, Sehlbach & Whiting Ltd, which was founded in 1878, as a lowly warehouseman at £4 a week, whilst also attending evening classes in bookkeeping and accounts. The company's line of business included

the wholesale distribution of men's and boys' apparel and furnishings.

Over the years Paul worked his way up the business finally becoming a director. His brother, Bruce, also joined the company and the two of them were effectively running the company by the 1990s.

Paul married Jacqueline Mary Low of Maidenhead in 1965, and they had three sons. Outside of his career and family, Paul played rugby at Maidenhead, becoming a Vice-President of the club, and rowed at Maidenhead Rowing Club. Later in life he was a keen member of the local lawn bowls club.

Paul loved people and was always great fun to be with. He will be sorely missed by his many friends and family."

**From Peter Hudson (53-59)**



**Angus G Robertson**  
**Born 31 August 1936**  
**Died 20 January 2024 - Aged 87**  
**At Bedford School 1943-1955 - Redburn**

After serving more than two years in the Royal Navy and becoming the First Lieutenant of a coastal patrol boat, Angus joined the family engineering firm of W

H A Robertsons & Co Ltd in Bedford, as a trainee in 1958. After working through the factory workshops, the production and buying departments, he spent nearly a year in Canada and the U.S.A. installing rolling mill equipment. Returning to Bedford, he worked for six months as assistant to the Works and Production Director and then for 18 months as Personal Assistant to the Vice-Chairman. He was appointed Sales Manager in 1962. In 1966 Robertson's amalgamated with heavy engineering subsidiary Loewy Engineering Co to form Loewy Robertson Engineering and by 1969 Angus was Managing Director and living in Bournemouth.

But it was the world of rowing that was Angus's passion. The name Angus Robertson was for decades synonymous in the rowing world with friendly, formidable, and fastidious, as he held sway as the Henley Steward, at various times in charge of Entries, Programme production, and the Commentary team.

Angus took up rowing as a boy at School, following in his father's footsteps. W.W.S. (Bill) Robertson C.B.E (15-25), rowed for the school, then Bedford Rowing Club and Leander Club; he was later the first President of Star Club. Angus raced for the School in the Princess Elizabeth Challenge Cup in 1954 and 55, for Bedford R.C. in the Wyfolds in 1958, and for Star Club in its inaugural year, in the Thames Cup in 1960. On each occasion his crew lost their first-round race. Why would one draw attention to this? Angus himself explained that it was notwithstanding this misfortune that he developed a great love of the Regatta and wanted to become a part of it – somehow. He was in luck; James Crowden (41-46) had just been elected a Steward and encouraged the disappointed 23-year-old Angus to go and help with the Commentary. He passed the audition and that was the start of his involvement, ultimately leading to him being elected a Steward in 1976. Within two years he was elected to the Committee of Management. In 1976 he went to the Olympics at Montreal and organised and carried out the sound broadcasting on

◀ rowing for the BBC, and also organised the commentary on the rowing on television. In 1977 he commentated on the Rowing Championships at Amsterdam

In due course, Angus became the Steward in charge of the Commentary team and his stentorian tones could be heard across the enclosures and further downstream giving reports on races without emotion or side, not to mention announcing the opening of the 'first sitting for luncheon...'

Angus was also the master of the pronunciation of the foreign crew names. German, Dutch, Bulgarian, Italian, Russian, all were enunciated faultlessly, and in full. "Ruderclub Hansa von tausend acht hundert achtundneunzig eingetragener Verein Dortmund, of the Federal Republic of Germany" was one of his best (and used in this form for the famous final of the Grand Challenge Cup at the 1989 Regatta). In the small boats events, where surnames are used, he would seek out the oarsmen to check if he was unsure of how their name should be spoken. Subordinates in the commentary team were meticulously prepared. The lofty Angus was a feared and respected figure. No member on the upper deck of the Floater, in sight of the commentator's prime seat, would dare query his vocalisation of a name; in any case all knew of his care in such matters. Like many other things, he said it was 'Regatta Standard'. His nickname 'The Voice of Henley' remained unchallenged.

Angus was the Steward in charge of the Entries Office and in the production of the Daily Racing Programme after his stint in the Commentary box. Woe-betide the person who submitted an entry form that he considered did not pass muster.

Angus's kindness to coaches of overseas crews was legendary. He could terrify a coach who should know better (anyone from the UK, in his view), but many was the coach of a far-flung country who found every assistance in completing their entry correctly, finding boats to borrow, and passing them on to the indomitable Pam Cole to sort out local accommodation. The Henley deadline for the receipt of entries was not something to be breached (as a few locals found to their cost over the years).

From 1995 to 2001 Angus umpired at the Regatta and was subsequently a Timekeeper. He was also editor of the Five Year Records until 2009.

In 1998, Henley Town and Visitors' Regatta elected him as President for the year. This one-day regatta, begun in the late 1850s, held 'on the fourth Saturday after Henley Royal Regatta', is as different as it is possible to be from its famous counterpart on the same reach. Angus was proud to spend the day presenting silverware and watching three abreast races with no separations of the lanes.

After semi-retirement Angus and his wife, Caroline (nee Allen), moved to the remote Cape Wrath in Sutherland, Scotland, on the shores of Loch Eriboll, where in 1999 he was a Chieftain of a Highland Gathering, with a new kilt to prove it. He would travel the 670 miles for committee meetings and took six weeks off for Henley.

There was another side to Angus' involvement in rowing that transcended the years and that was in South Africa. He had developed a deep love of the country from his days in the family business spending 2 years there in the 1960's. He spent time getting to know the rowing community, and often umpired at regattas long into his retirement from professional

life. As recently as the early 2000s he could be seen in blazer, tie, and flannels regardless of the temperature, taking charge of races at the Buffalo Regatta (in East London, Eastern Cape) among others. His mere presence at the event as well as his comments about the Buffalo Regatta speaks volumes: "...it is the best regatta in South Africa by far."

Bedford Regatta was barely complete without a Robertson holding a key position in its running, at least in the 20th Century. Angus' father Bill wrote in March 1962 on the virtues of 'bank umpiring' for Rowing Magazine. Angus himself contributed the first article on the importance of 'the Regatta and Rowing in the Town of Bedford' for the 150th anniversary celebrations. In the piece (entitled 'At Bedford by the River' – the last stanza of each verse of the Bedford School Song) Angus recalls that he first sat in a boat aged seven, coxing a Bedford R.C. VIII one Sunday morning during the Second World War. He goes on to credit Jack Bowers, the Bedford Boatman, for developing his deep love of the sport, beginning in 1950 with being taught to row in a clinker four. He talks of where all of the four went in their notable rowing careers; but he ends saying:

"...and I became involved with the management of Henley Royal Regatta, one of the most important aspects of my life. Thank you Jack."



### **Robin E R Rumboll**

**Born 1 August 1939**

**Died 4 October 2023 - Aged 84**

**At Bedford School**

**1952-1957 - Talbot's**

Robin Ernest Richard Rumboll was born on 1 August 1939 in Buenos Aires, the son of Charles Richard ('Dick') and Beryl Rumboll. The couple also had a

younger son, Timothy (56-61), born in 1943.

The Rumboll family's connections with Argentina started in the late 1800s when Robin's great-uncle had gone to the country to work as an engineer on the Argentine railways. He persuaded his brother, Ernest Rumboll (1881-91), Robin's grandfather, to follow him and he remained in Argentina for the remainder of his life, working in insurance and marrying the daughter of British migrants.

Robin's father, C Richard Rumboll (22-26), trained as an accountant and then worked for Price Waterhouse, Peat and Co in Buenos Aires. Robin spent his childhood in the Devoto and Hurlingham districts of Buenos Aires, where many of the Anglo-Argentine community lived, the Hurlingham district having grown up around the social and sporting club of the same name which been established in 1888 by migrants from Britain on the lines of a similar club in Fulham.

From March 1948, Robin attended St George's College in Buenos Aires, a boys' school that had been established in 1898 to model an English public school. He excelled in sports including football, swimming and athletics and, after the annual sports day in his first year at the college, the school magazine recorded that the outstanding performance of the day "was Rumboll's great effort in breaking the high jump record by three inches. He shows great promise".

Having passed the common entrance examination in 1952,

◀ was introduced.

At the time of the lengthy debates on Jersey's defence contribution in the mid- 1980s, Robin argued strongly for a search-and-rescue helicopter. Although the idea was by far the most popular in a JEP poll of options, the idea was dropped when the UK made it clear that they would not regard a helicopter as a valid contribution to defence.

In 1989, Robin made headlines by proposing a new £120 million airport constructed on reclaimed land off La Rocque. He felt that the benefits could be manifold, reducing the risk of fog disruption and freeing up land at St Peter for housing and commercial development. The idea was, however, met with considerable opposition from environmentalists with the Harbours and Airport committee also dismissing the idea as totally impractical. He said later that the proposal had taught him a huge political lesson. "It taught me to research and document things properly before going public, otherwise you are sniped at the first hurdle".

Robin was the driving force in 1992 behind the launch of Channel 103, Jersey's first commercial radio station. He was chairman of Channel Radio Ltd, which won the franchise to set up the new station. He subsequently expanded his interests into other commercial radio stations before Channel 103 was sold to Tindle Radio. He was chairman of Help a Jersey Child, a charity established by Channel 103 in 2005, which raised many thousands of pounds for children in Jersey.

Robin retired from the States in December 1996 but made it clear that he hoped to continue serving the Island. In July 1998, he was appointed as the first chairman of the shadow police authority. Robin also gave freely of his time to many charitable organisations in Jersey. In 1967, he joined the fundraising committee of the Jersey Wildlife Preservation Trust, and he remained involved with Durrell for over 40 years. In 2001, he and his family set up the Rumboll travel award to recognise exceptional staff performance at Durrell and allow recipients of the award to travel to develop their career in wildlife conservation.

In 1979, Robin was one of a small group of Islanders who formed a steering committee to progress the creation of a Cheshire Home in Jersey. He took on the role of treasurer and was instrumental in progressing the financing of the project through to the opening of the home in 1983. In 2003, he chaired the GOSH Jersey appeal which raised over £1.5 million to help with the construction of accommodation for patients and families at Great Ormond Street hospital.

Robin was a keen sportsman throughout his life, enjoying a variety of sports including sailing, tennis and golf. He also had a lifelong love of horses. In 2005, he became president of the Jersey Race Club and oversaw the construction of much-needed new facilities built under a viewing bank for spectators.

Robin is survived by his wife Cynthia, his children Vanessa, Julia, Christopher and Joanna and his grandchildren.

### **Graham P C Saunders**

**Born 15 March 1947**

**Died 6 February 2024 -**

**Aged 76**

**At Bedford School**

**1958-1964 – Bromham**



Following Bedford Graham went to Peterhouse College, Cambridge and then tried his hand at a few jobs including Computer Sales before settling on accountancy. He became a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants and eventually joined Keens Shay Keens Ltd in Bedford, becoming the Head of Audit and Assurance,

specialising in housing associations and the construction industry.

Graham was a great Fives and tennis player and met his future wife Sally, through his local tennis club, proposing to her whilst on holiday in Malta. They had four children: Julian, Fiona, Olivia and Edward (91-02). Sally contracted Parkinson's in her later years and Graham nursed her devotedly through her final days until her death in 2016.

Graham was the Old Bedfordians representative for Fives and Squash for many years and did not miss a single OB game for very many years.

He is survived by his four children and six grandchildren.

### **Dr David R Sayers**

**Born 25 March 1938**

**Died 6 December 2022 - Aged 84**

**At Bedford School 1951-1956 - Talbot's**

### **Mrs Joan Schoenenberger**

**Born 6 May 1929**

**Died 12 January 2024 - Aged 94**

**Bedford School Staff 1971-1976**



### **Barry Sharp**

**Born 6 July 1940**

**Died 3 May 2024 -**

**Aged 83**

**At Bedford School**

**1951-1958 - St Peter's**



### **David A Shephard**

**Born 2 June 1965**

**Died 19 May 2024 - Aged 58**

**At Bedford School**

**1978-1982 - Burnaby**

It was in the autumn of 1978 that Dave joined Burnaby House. As well as it being the start of Dave's senior school education, it was also the beginning of

his dormitory pals' musical education. Because Dave loved his music! The day began and ended with music. When he wasn't in class, prep or sleeping Dave would be listening to his music. Our education would continue long after lights out. We would all fall asleep listening The Eagles, Carole King, Supertramp and Pink Floyd played on a radio cassette player.

Dress sense was also very important to Dave and his sense of fashion tested the limits of the school at times. (Which wasn't hard to be fair). I do, however, remember that suede pixie boots and skintight black jeans were a step too far

for the school back in the eighties. Burnaby, as a boarding house at that period, was unique. It was a baptism of fire into Bedford School. So, trying to be invisible rather than standing out was a far safer route to take. But that wasn't how Dave rolled. Afghan coats, patchouli oil and necklaces were worn with pride despite the unwanted attention it brought him from other members of the house.

With a father in the Foreign Office Dave was also well travelled for such a young man and would always entertain us with tales from Singapore or other exotic homes.

It was no surprise to anyone that Dave gravitated towards Art as his key A Level. He had, throughout our time at Bedford, shown remarkable artistic talent.

One night in the boarding house Dave went for a nocturnal bike ride out to a party in one of the villages. Unfortunately, unlike in *Escape from Alcatraz*, Dave's well-padded bed was discovered by one of the guards before daybreak. The result was Dave finished his A Levels at Nene College in Northampton. Despite the slightly premature end to Dave's school life at Bedford, he had many fond memories of his time there.

Dave went on to study Illustration at Brighton Polytechnic and began a career as an illustrator. His prolific career highlights included work for Marvel Comics, Oxford University Press and the BBC to name a few.

As well as being a talented illustrator, Dave was a highly proficient swimmer and cyclist. He swam the English Channel and competed in Race Across America, a cycle race from coast to coast. He competed in numerous triathlons and the Etape du Tour, a leg of the Tour de France.

But for Dave, his first love was for his family. His wife and soulmate, Kelly, and their two sons Japhy and Albie. Just a week before he passed away, he confided in fellow OB Gary Dimmock (73-83) that he couldn't believe his luck – He had a career he loved and the love and support of Kelly and his boys. And he was surrounded by his wonderful family and friends. Dave was true to himself. He never changed.

Dave really was one of the good guys and brightened any room he walked into. He is and will continue to be missed by all who knew and loved him.

**Neil Dawson (78-83)**



**R Patrick F Shorten**

**Born 19 September 1933**

**Died 21 December 2023 -**

**Aged 90**

**At Bedford School**

**1941-1950 - Crescent**

Patrick was born and raised in Bedford, the son of a cattle farmer, Richard, and housewife, Barbara (who was very active in

the Mothers Guild). He also had an elder sister Virginia, who attended Bedford High School. Patrick's father was from the south of Ireland; he relocated to England during the Irish civil war in the 1920's. Patrick always remained proud of his Irish heritage and took the opportunity to visit his fathers' homeland whenever he could.

At Bedford, Patrick admitted himself that he didn't have the strongest academic record but enjoyed certain subjects such as History and Latin as well, as playing in the 2nd XV. After

leaving school following his General Certificate and taking some 'O'-levels at Bedford (Mander) College, he carried out his National Service in Kempston Barracks in the 'Beds 'n' Herts' Regiment. He was posted there on compassionate grounds due to his father's declining health. Outside of school, he was a server at St. Paul's church in the town centre and was an active member of the Young Conservatives, where he was chairman in the mid 1950's.

In 1955 Patrick saw an advert for a junior in the sales office of the paper company, Bowaters. He was offered the job and took it as it offered more money than the other that was open to him. Thus began a 45 year career in the paper and packaging industry. After 23.5 years with Bowaters (finishing as Sales Director), he then worked for two other paper companies, Read & Smith (now DS Smith Paper) and Stora Billerud, before opening the UK office for paper agents, Continental Cellulose, in 1988, where he was Managing Director until his retirement in 2000.

Being a people person, Patrick enjoyed his time in sales and was ready to engage with anyone in a customer's organisation, from Managing Director to printer or operator. He also appreciated the opportunity to travel extensively through Europe, North America and even to South America, enjoying the chance to expand his business connections and to learn about other countries.

For Patrick, the paper making and packaging trades were far more than just work; he revelled in the social aspects as well. He was clothed in the livery of the Worshipful Company of Stationers and Newspaper Makers in 1985 and was installed as Master in 2005. He also was President of the Stationers Social Society in 1996, and for some years was Chairman of the Fleet Street Club. Apart from these activities, he also served with numerous trade organisations associated with the Paper and Board Industry.

Outside work, education was extremely important to Patrick; he established a Charitable Endowment linked to Brill C of E Primary School to support former pupils in their future educational needs, which helped many dozens through secondary and tertiary studies. In addition, he served two terms as the Staff Governor for Bedford School and as Deputy Chairman on the Harpur Trust of which he was most proud, as well as being a Vice President of the OB Club.

For his recreational pursuits, he had a wide range of interests which included reading, poetry (especially writing sonnets), antiques (porcelain and silver), wine, sport (purely watching), as well as joining in with family activities. He also loved to entertain, being something of a bon viveur, especially at his beloved Waterloo House. In his latter years as his health declined due to Parkinsons, he continued to be very active at family events and especially took great interest in the development of his 5 grandchildren, always ready to tell them tales of his upbringing and early life, without over emphasising any hardships.

He is survived by his wife, Glynis, sons William (84-89) and Ben (83-90), and daughter Melissa.

**John H W Steedman**

**Born 23 December 1945**

**Died 4 July 2024 - Aged 78**

**At Bedford School 1959-1963 – Kirkman's**

John was the eldest of three brothers, (Michael (61-67) and Robin (64-73)). who, between us, spanned 15 years

◀ at Kirkman's; Indeed, one of my own earliest memories, aged 3, is of the family driving up from home in Harpenden to introduce John to his housemaster, Mr Reeve, in the old Kirkman's in Newnham Avenue. John enjoyed his comparatively brief time at Bedford, making lasting friendships and developing a lifelong enthusiasm for rowing.

Academically, John excelled, leaving Bedford with an English Electric scholarship to Christ's College, Cambridge to read electrical and electronic engineering. Whereas all the rest of the family studied modern languages, John always maintained that his own interest in engineering began with his childhood Meccano set. While at Christ's, John threw himself into the social life, forming friendships which he maintained for the rest of his life. He was also very involved with the Boat Club and the contemporary craze for tiddlywinks. He left Cambridge with the luxury of five job offers to choose between.

Following seven years in computing, John decided it was time for a change of course and went on to complete a Master of Science degree at Sloan School of Management, Massachusetts Institute of Technology. After 26 years working for Citibank in Amsterdam, New York and London, during which time he received multiple awards, he retired in 2001 to start his own business working from home as an independent trainer specialising in Credit Risk, Credit Analysis and Financial Analysis for Corporate bankers.

John had a 1945 MG bought in Cambridge in 1966 for £150, which he restored and rebuilt three times, and for a time he was Treasurer of the MG Car Club T Register Committee. He relished village life at home in Hampshire and served as Chairman of his local Residents' Association and treasurer of the parish church council.

John married Sarah Dalton in 1977, and they were a devoted couple. They had three children: Ben, Toby and Hannah; and four grandchildren: Oli, Georgina, Zadie and Frida. He died in Southampton on 4 July 2024 after a long illness, aged 78.

**Robin Steedman, 64-73**

### **John K Turner**

**Born 5 February 1931**

**Died 29 November 2023 - Aged 92**

**At Bedford School 1942-1948 - Crescent**



### **Stuart L Viner**

**Born 12 March 1936**

**Died 2024 - Aged 88**

**At Bedford School  
1945-1955 - St Peter's**

Stuart Viner was born to Cyril and Elsie in the School House, Stotfold, Bedfordshire, a younger brother to Mavis and Tony (42-50). After war years of air raids

and housing evacuees, he followed Tony to Bedford School in 1945. Here, like Tony, he joined the rowing team, hoping also to be the cox, sitting calmly at the back. However, there was a smaller boy in his year who took that role, and Stuart found himself rowing instead, a role he soon came to enjoy. At Bedford he also won the Tarbutt Prize in 1955.

Stuart undertook National Service in the Royal Army Educational Corps, being promoted to Sergeant. On leaving

the army he went to teacher training college at Culham, where he again joined the rowing team and made many lifelong friends.

After meeting Ann Oaker, who was at teacher training college in Bletchley, they married and settled in Kilsby, near Rugby, and Stuart began teaching in Warwickshire. After a stint as acting head teacher at Bourton-on-Dunsmore, he soon became full-time head at Napton on the Hill, then at New Bilton First School (later St Oswald's), where he stayed until his retirement. After his death, a college friend wrote, "His legacy is to be found in the lives of the very many children whose lives he touched."

Stuart's sense of duty to the wider community led to him becoming chairman, then president, of Kilsby's Scout Group Management Committee. He also served on the Parish Council, where he helped to set up the Neighbourhood Watch, and sold poppies for the Royal British Legion for over 20 years.

Stuart also organised college reunions, one of which involved getting the rowing team back together on the Thames, and in retirement he became treasurer of the Rugby Retired Teachers' Association.

Stuart enjoyed travelling, from cycling through Europe as a teenager, to trips as far afield as New Zealand later in life. He also spent many years building a beautiful model railway, which delighted visitors young and old alike. Another hobby was making videos of extended family holidays, which will always be treasured.

Stuart died peacefully in hospital, with his children, Catherine and Andrew, at his side. Sadly, his beloved wife Ann died five months earlier – just the previous year they had celebrated their Diamond Wedding Anniversary. Stuart was also a loving grandfather to Freya, Stanley and Ruby.



### **Peter B Voisey**

**Born 16 February 1932**

**Died 17 April 2023 - Aged 91**

**At Bedford School 1946-1948 –  
Pemberley**

Peter was born in Wallingford, Berkshire to Bernard G Voisey and Hazel Rosalie (Abenheim). On leaving Bedford Peter attended

Bedford College and then migrated to South Africa as a young man to work for Goldfields. He studied at the University of the Witwatersrand.

He married Hilary Devitt in South Africa. They were childhood friends/neighbours when Hilary's family lived in the UK. He returned to the UK in 1977 with his family and worked for Shell for many years. He had one son and two daughters with Hilary.

Peter and Hilary divorced later in life and Peter married Brenda (aka Belinda) Wykes in 2005.



### **Patrick D Vulliamy**

**Born 25 May 1927**

**Died 6 October 2022 - Aged 95**

**At Bedford School 1940-1945 - St  
Cuthbert's**

Pat was born in Quetta, India to Maj Gen Colwyn H H Vulliamy CB, DSO and

Veronica Mary (Ellis).

Patrick did his National Service after leaving Bedford and

joined the Guards Brigade, spending some time in Palestine. He then went to Peterhouse, Cambridge to read Engineering.

He joined Scott, Wilson and Partners and was posted to Lagos, Nigeria in 1967. In 1972 he went to Kenya where he co-ordinated the activities of all the African offices.

### **John T Wagstaff**

**Born 13 August 1948**

**Died 20 February 2022 - Aged 73**

**At Bedford School 1959-1966 - Paulo Pontine**

### **Christopher N F Ward**

**Born 7 December 1960**

**Died 2024 - Aged 64**

**At Bedford School 1974-1979 - Paulo Pontine**

**Bedford School Staff 2014-2021**

Chris won a George Fischer Castings Sponsorship on leaving school and spent many years managing a diamond mine in South America.

A very well travelled man, Chris married a Brazilian lady, but following their divorce he returned to the UK and the house he had grown up in, to care for his ailing father who had Alzheimer's. He was a skilled craftsman and even built a rowing boat in his garage. He joined Bedford School in 2014 as a technician in the DT Department but left in 2021 to go travelling again, this time to Sri Lanka.



### **David A H Wells**

**Born 18 April 1939**

**Died 7 February 2024 - Aged 84**

**At Bedford School 1952-1957 - Pemberley**

On leaving school David was one of 12 boys chosen out of a field of 800 to take part in the first group of degree apprenticeships for Shell. It was a five-year

sandwich course whereby you worked for 6 months in the industry and then 6 months at Surrey University. He was a very practical person and enjoyed repairing his own MG car and doing all the servicing. He got his engineering degree in 1962 and joined Schlumberger Inc, a worldwide oilfield services company.

David spent the next 30 years travelling the world and working in such places as Nigeria, Ghana, Norway, Holland, Brazil and Argentina. Initially he would return to the UK for a month or so between contracts and would host a party for all his university and local friends. In the 1990s he joined Tucker Energy Services out of Trinidad & Tobago before becoming an independent consultant, working for the Venezuelan and Colombian Governments, still on the oil rigs.

He was briefly married to a Swedish lady before he met Liliana Gonzales in Bogotá at the turn of the century.

David died on the 7<sup>th</sup> February 2024 of medical complications. He was an exceptionally generous and gregarious man, always giving parties and enjoying life. He will be greatly missed by Liliana and his close friend, Blake Simms, whom he met on his first day at Shell.

### **Robert F Willson**

**Born 19 November 1930**

**Died 28 December 2023 - Aged 93**

**At Bedford School 1941-1947 - St Cuthbert's**

Robert was the son of Robert P Willson and Winifred W Willson of Biggleswade.

Robert joined the family-run furnishing business named E. Dodimead, and after a long history the business was sold in 1984. After a small break, Robert decided to return to his former passion after stumbling across a potential site in the picturesque town of Tenterden, Kent, and Tenterden House Interiors was born.

It is still run by his wife, Ingrid Willson, and their son Jamie. 2016 marked the opening of a second shop, Manor Row Interiors, also in Tenterden.



### **Julian B Wolfendale**

**Born 4 June 1964**

**Died 7 December 2023 - Aged 59**

**At Bedford School 1975-1979 - Paulo Pontine**

Julian Wolfendale was born in Reading. Given up for adoption he grew up in rural Buckinghamshire. Following a troubled childhood and adolescence, with an

unhealthy attraction to trouble, he eventually chose a different life and straightened out after seeing too many burnouts. He joined the railway and, after working as a manager for Eurostar in London for 13 years, he left to pursue his writing career. He was also Duty Manager at the Athletes' Village for the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics

His first book, *Yeah Baby*, was featured both at the 2010 London Book Fair and Glastonbury festival. It is about what happens when teenage rebellion runs out of steam. 'One day you wake up as someone else, up to your neck in drugs and guns. Exactly where it all started to go wrong was the same place as it began'.

His second book, *Damaged Goods: A True Story of Adoption, Music, People & Choices*, is the story of his life and the people, music and choices that made it possible to write. With music and topical references from the 60s, the 70s and the 80s; it is an insider's view of what it was like to be a punk in the UK punk scene; a festival-goer at Glastonbury in the days before police and fences, and a host of the parties that spawned rave. It received some great reviews, including one in *Record Collector Magazine* and one from Howard Marks, as well as being a bestseller on Kindle.

His third book, *'Not Quite Classic Cars'*, takes the reader back to the days when tinkering beneath the bonnet was a national pastime and car ownership was an occupation as well as a luxury.

Tracing his natural parents at 30 years of age, he discovered that his real father was the legendary 60s rock star Arthur Brown, who was still very much alive and kicking.

Julian was diagnosed with bowel cancer at the age of 50. After major surgery, he had a long and painful recovery, but unfortunately, the cancer returned in 2022, having travelled to his lungs and liver.

Julian married twice and had two daughters.